



## A FRAMEWORK FOR MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A Framework enabling An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and Local Authorities to prepare for and make a co-ordinated response to major emergencies resulting from events such as fires, transport accidents, hazardous substance incidents and severe weather.





## A Framework for Major Emergency Management

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## Preface

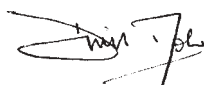
Major emergency management is a key challenge and a priority issue for Government. Clearly, the world in which we live is constantly changing and we need to develop our major emergency management architecture to enable us to deal effectively with the possibility of new risks and threats. In the last few years most European Countries have engaged in review and development of their major emergency or civil protection arrangements. This new Framework for Major Emergency Management moves in line with international trends in this field.

The publication of this document marks the culmination of an extensive process of consultation and development. The development of the new Framework was overseen and validated by independent international consultants.

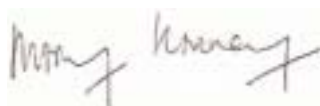
The purpose of the new Framework is to put in place arrangements that will enable the three principal emergency response agencies, the local authorities, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive to co-ordinate their efforts whenever a major emergency occurs. It is the foundation block for the development of a new generation of major emergency plans by the principal response agencies.

This document sets out mechanisms for co-ordination at all levels of major emergency management - on site, at local level and at regional level, it defines a common language or terminology to make inter-agency working simpler and it introduces a system to immediately determine a lead agency in every emergency situation. It also provides for linking to national level emergency management.

Turning the provisions of the Framework into working major emergency management plans will involve a significant level of development activity, both within the individual principal response agencies and jointly with their local and regional partners. It is only when all of these plans are in place that the development phase of this process will be completed. Thereafter, the challenge will be to continuously monitor developments and modify the plans to ensure that they are always up to date with the latest risks. It is through this continuous process and through regularly carrying out exercises to test the plans that we can be sure that we are as prepared as possible to protect the public should disaster strike.



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As with any document of its kind, this Framework draws heavily on international good practice. The contribution of international colleagues to the development of the ideas supporting the Framework, obtained directly and indirectly, is acknowledged.

The role of international consultants OCTO, who provided an external oversight of the review process, is particularly acknowledged. In addition to their oversight brief, OCTO provided expert input and material for the development of the sections on Risk Assessment, Information Management and Co-ordination Centres included in the Framework.

The inter-agency Review Working Group supported by the D/EHLG review project team undertook the comprehensive review of the 1984 Framework for Co-ordinated Response to Major Emergencies, which culminated in this document. The membership of these groups is listed below and their contribution is also particularly acknowledged.

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# Section 1: Introduction to Framework

## 1.1 Background to the Framework for Major Emergency Management

Every country is subject to a range of emergencies such as fires, transport accidents, incidents involving hazardous substances and severe weather emergencies, most of which are small-scale events that are readily dealt with by the principal emergency services.<sup>1</sup> However, there is a potential for more extreme emergencies, which could be beyond the normal response capability of the principal emergency services. Ireland has experienced several examples<sup>2</sup> of this type of emergency.

In developed nations, such as Ireland, the public expects that the emergency services will rise to the challenges posed by a major emergency, regardless of the source of the hazard. The expectation is that the response to both the emergency event and any resulting crisis will be properly co-ordinated and effectively managed. *The Framework for Major Emergency Management* is a fundamental element in enhancing Ireland's capability to meet the challenge posed by such events.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Framework

This document replaces the *Framework for Co-ordinated Response to Major Emergency*<sup>3</sup>, which has underpinned major emergency preparedness and response capability since 1984. The new Framework was prepared under the aegis of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Major Emergencies<sup>4</sup>, and has been approved by Government decision.

The Framework was drafted by an inter-agency Review Working Group made up of representatives of An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities. The Review Working Group was chaired and supported by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities are the agencies charged with managing the response to emergency situations which arise either locally or regionally. They provide and operate Ireland's principal emergency services, which respond to emergencies on a daily basis. The Divisions and Regions of An Garda


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<sup>1</sup> The three principal emergency services (PES) in Ireland are **An Garda Síochána**, the **Ambulance Service** and the **Fire Service**. A fourth principal emergency service, the **Irish Coast Guard**, is responsible for the initiation, control and co-ordination of maritime emergencies (Search & Rescue, Pollution and Salvage, and Casualty) in the Irish territorial waters, harbours and coastline which include the Irish International Search and Rescue Region and the Pollution Responsibility Zone.

<sup>2</sup> The Bantry Bay (Bettelgeuse) ship explosion/fire (1979); the Buttevant rail crash (1980); the Stardust fire (1981); the Cherryville rail crash (1983); and the Air India disaster (1985).

<sup>3</sup> **Framework for Co-ordinated Response to Major Emergency**, (November 1984).

<sup>4</sup> The Inter-Departmental Committee on Major Emergencies, which was established by Government decision has now been replaced by a National Steering Group. The terms of reference and membership of the National Steering Group are given in Appendix F2.



Síochána, the Health Service Executive Areas, and the principal Local Authorities, referred to collectively in this document as the principal response agencies, are listed in Appendix F1. These are the authorities/executive agencies that will lead the implementation of the provisions of the Framework. In general, the response will be initiated by the three principal emergency services, which deal with “normal” emergencies as part of their every-day work. The principal emergency services have protocols and procedures in place to support their work at a range of events, from small, routine occurrences to large-scale incidents.

The Framework sets out arrangements which will facilitate the principal emergency services in scaling-up the response required, so as to utilise the full resources of the principal response agencies, and to work together in the management of large-scale incidents. The Framework also provides mechanisms for linking the work of the principal response agencies with those at other levels of Government.

The Framework sets out arrangements by which other services, such as the Defence Forces, voluntary emergency services<sup>5</sup>, utilities, transport companies, industrial and other participants, and not least the communities affected, can support and work with the principal response agencies in reacting to and managing major emergencies.

The Framework provides guidance for bodies/ agencies, which are involved in different aspects of emergency management on how they should interact with the principal response agencies. This is especially important to those who are required to prepare emergency plans (such as site- or event-specific plans for SEVESO<sup>6</sup> sites, airports, ports, major sports events, etc.). Where such plans involve the principal response agencies, the Framework defines how they will respond and operate at such sites or events.



### 1.3 Structure of the Framework

After this introductory chapter, the Framework is structured to reflect the five stages of the systems approach to major emergency management (see Section 1.7). The Framework is supported by a number of other documents, including a series of fourteen appendices as listed in the contents above. These appendices are presented as a separate document for ease of use by the reader. In addition to the Appendices, a series of further Guidance

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<sup>5</sup> Ireland has a large range of voluntary emergency service organisations including Civil Defence, the Red Cross, the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, St. John’s Ambulance Service, Mountain Rescue Teams, Cave Rescue Teams, Search and Rescue Dog Associations, River Rescue Units, Community Inshore Rescue Units, RNLI, Sub-Aqua units, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Chemical Plants falling within the remit of the SEVESO Regulations. The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, give effect to Council Directive 96/82/EC and 2003/105/EC.



Documents on specific subjects are being developed to assist in the implementation of aspects of the Framework. These will be self-contained reference documents.


#### 1.4 Scope of the Framework

The Framework is designed primarily to provide for the protection, support and welfare of the public in times of emergency. Effective arrangements to ensure public safety in times of emergency also have the benefit of helping to safeguard the environment, the economy, infrastructure and property. The Framework sets out to achieve this by:

- setting out specific requirements and uniform procedures in relation to those matters which can be standardised nationally, including the declaration of a major emergency, allocation of functions and responsibilities between the agencies, command and control of operations and inter-agency co-ordination arrangements;
- mobilising, controlling and making the best use of available resources for response at local, regional, national and international level, as appropriate;
- setting out and allocating responsibility for ensuring that appropriate inter-agency co-ordination arrangements are developed and in place at local and regional level for effective co-ordination of individual response efforts to major emergencies, so that the combined result is greater than the sum of their individual efforts;
- providing common terminology to facilitate co-ordinated and safe working;
- identifying and prioritising risks so as to ensure that existing services are prepared and equipped to deal with a range of realistic potential emergencies;
- underpinning collective preparedness by the principal response agencies so as to ensure a prompt and effective co-ordinated response by them to a major emergency; and
- ensuring that downstream crises/consequences arising from an emergency are managed effectively.

While the Framework sets out common arrangements, it also recognises the need for a flexible approach and that the response of the agencies will need to take account of the unique factors involved in each emergency situation.





The Framework provides for an overall, combined response as soon as a major emergency is declared. Any one of the principal response agencies may declare a major emergency and the mobilisation procedures of the Major Emergency Plans of the three relevant agencies will be activated immediately they are notified of the declaration. The Major Emergency Plan of each agency sets out that agency's response, as well as its contribution to the combined response of all agencies. The functions and responsibilities of each agency are set out in the Framework so as to ensure that the response to a major emergency is both comprehensive and co-ordinated.

The Framework does not and is not intended to address the detailed response procedures of the relevant agencies in relation to specific incidents or hazards. However, it identifies where such procedures are required and it is expected that each of the agencies will review or develop its own procedures and arrangements on which the response of that agency will be built. Such procedures should be consistent with the provisions of the Framework.

The Framework deals with major emergencies which may occur in Ireland. However, an emergency occurring near the border with Northern Ireland could impact across the border and vice versa. In such a situation, effective information sharing and co-ordination with corresponding response services in Northern Ireland are required. The Framework is intended to support and enhance the existing liaison and co-operation between the principal response agencies in border areas.

There are a number of potential emergencies which if they occur are most likely to be on a national scale – including nuclear accidents, infectious disease outbreaks (e.g. smallpox, influenza pandemic) or outbreaks of animal disease (e.g. foot and mouth, avian flu). In contrast with major emergencies, the characteristics of these emergencies may include being non-site specific and occurring over an extended time period. In these situations the relevant national emergency plan will be activated by the Lead Government Department or the appropriate national body. The co-ordination arrangements of local Major Emergency Plans may be activated in support of these National Emergency Plans.

In the wake of a series of international terrorist attacks, a growing public concern about the threat of terrorism has led to a renewed focus on preparedness for terrorist-related incidents, including the impact of conventional explosives. The Framework provides for a co-ordinated response to such incidents, which are sometimes referred to collectively as CCBRN<sup>7</sup> incidents.

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<sup>7</sup> CCBRN meaning attacks involving C-conventional explosives; C-chemical substances; B-biological agents; R-radiological or N-nuclear material.

## 1.5 Defining a Major Emergency

The term “emergency”, meaning “unexpected and potentially dangerous situation, requiring immediate action”, can describe a broad range of situations. These may vary from the most minor, which are dealt with by persons without emergency services involvement, through “normal” emergencies, which involve response by one or more of the principal emergency services, to major emergencies.

The Framework defines a Major Emergency as follows:

**A Major Emergency is any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.**

## 1.6 Principles Underpinning the Framework

This section sets out principles, which underpin the Framework as follows:

- The Framework is based on an “All-Hazards”<sup>8</sup> approach, where the common features of co-ordinated response and the management of common consequences are recognised, regardless of the origin of the emergency / crisis;
- The Framework makes explicit a set of core values in major emergency management as follows:
  - protection and care of the public at times of vulnerability;
  - clear leadership in times of crisis;
  - early and appropriate response;
  - efficient, co-ordinated operations;
  - realistic and rational approach, capable of being delivered;
  - transparent systems, with accountability;
  - harnessing community spirit;
  - the ethos of self-protection;
  - maintenance of essential services; and
  - safe working.

<sup>8</sup> The term “All Hazards” is an internationally used term, which has arisen from the recognition that there are many common elements in the response to emergencies, regardless of the particular hazard that has given rise to that emergency.

- Major emergency management arrangements build on current strengths, and make full use of the core competencies and organisational strengths of the principal response agencies as the basis for the response;
- Major emergency management arrangements fit in with existing organisational and government structures, subject to appropriate co-ordination mechanisms being added;
- The response to emergencies builds from the basic level with capability to respond, that is from the local organisational units of An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive, and the Local Authorities;
- The forms of crisis management inherent in civil protection, which have emerged to protect populations against natural and technological disasters, informed the development of the Framework;
- The Framework moves in line with international trends in this field, and adapts relevant aspects of models from other countries to the Irish context; and
- The Framework is constructed around the internationally accepted five-stage systematic frame for emergency management – referred to as the “Safety Chain” in the Netherlands, “Integrated Emergency Management” in the United Kingdom, etc.

### 1.7 The Systems Approach to Major Emergency Management

The systems approach to Major Emergency Management involves a continuous cycle of activity. The principal elements of the systems approach are:

- Hazard Analysis/ Risk Assessment;
- Mitigation/ Risk Management;
- Planning and Preparedness;
- Co-ordinated Response; and
- Recovery.

**Hazard Analysis/Risk Assessment** is a process by which the hazards facing a particular community are identified and analysed/assessed in terms of the threat/risk, which they pose.

**Mitigation/Risk Management** includes all actions taken to eliminate or reduce the risk to people, property and the environment from the hazards which threaten them.

**FIGURE 1.1**  
**Five-Stage Emergency Management Paradigm**




**Planning and Preparedness** are the actions undertaken before an emergency occurs and include -

- preparation of emergency plans;
- development of preparedness and response arrangements and the building of capacity for assigned functions, in light of the risks faced;
- education, training and development of staff who will be required to respond to an emergency;
- exercising and testing of systems, plans and procedures;
- the procurement of resources necessary to underpin preparedness;
- the maintenance of any necessary facilities; and
- the audit/assessment of preparedness.

**Response** takes place immediately before, during and directly after an emergency and includes activities such as public warning, search and rescue, emergency medical assistance, extinguishing of fires, containment of hazardous materials, transport of casualties, treatment of casualties, maintenance of public order and all associated support activities, as well as the co-ordination and management of these activities.

**Recovery** is generally regarded as occurring in two phases - immediate recovery and long-term recovery.

- Immediate recovery activities include damage assessment, the clearing of debris, the restoration of essential supplies and services, and investigation.

- 
- Long-term recovery activities include ongoing treatment and support of casualties and survivors, reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, buildings and services, restoring normality, and the identification of actions that may mitigate the effects of future emergencies.

## 1.8 Common Language and Terminology

In situations where different organisations are working together, they need a common vocabulary to enable them to communicate effectively. This is particularly the case where the principal emergency services and a range of other bodies need to work together under the pressures that a major emergency will bring. Differences in terminologies and nomenclatures used by responders from various agencies or diverse technical disciplines can seriously impede the achievement of co-ordinated and safe emergency management.



The Framework, therefore, provides for the use of common terminology and a full set of relevant terms is provided in Appendix F3. Appendix F3 also provides a list of acronyms used in this document. Some key terms are defined in each section, for ease of reference.

Among the significant changes which the Framework introduces in the area of language is a change from the title “Major Emergency Planning” to “Major Emergency Management”. The rationale for this change is that planning is just one aspect of management, and that there can be an undue focus on the “Major Emergency Plan” to the detriment of other aspects of emergency preparedness and management. The preferred European terminology in this field is “Civil Protection”. However, this document uses the term “Major Emergency Management”, as being the most appropriate for Irish circumstances.

## 1.9 Delivering the Framework

The process of ensuring that the requirements of the Framework are implemented is as important as the terms of the Framework itself. This section sets out the approach to this critical aspect. The process of implementation is seen as having three levels – local / agency, regional and national. It is envisaged that programmes for implementation of the new Framework over a two-year time scale will be developed at these three levels.

**The Local/Agency Level**, where the individual principal response agencies, listed in Appendix F1, are responsible for undertaking the requirements set out in the Framework, such as having a Major Emergency Plan for their functional area and having supporting plans, procedures, instructions and arrangements in place to deliver the functions assigned to them by the Framework. These requirements are set out in bold-printed statements in Sections 2, 3 and 4 and also form the basis of the preparedness appraisal system introduced in Section 4. The Framework draws from the principal response



agencies' practice in relation to normal emergencies. It may be necessary for the principal response agencies to review and amend their existing practices and procedures in light of the Framework.

**The Regional Level**, where, building on good practice that has emerged over the years, the principal response agencies come together in defined regions to form Regional Steering Groups to co-ordinate the inter-agency aspects of major emergency preparedness and management. (See Appendix F4 for further information on the regional dimension and a map of the Major Emergency Management Regions).

**The National Level**, where the National Steering Group via the parent Departments of the principal response agencies (i.e. the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government) is assigned responsibility for promulgating and promoting the Framework and ensuring timely and consistent implementation of its provisions.

## Section 2: Hazard Analysis/Risk Assessment

### 2.0 Introduction

To prepare effectively to deal with potential emergencies it is necessary to have regard to the specific risks faced by a community. The significance of risk management is increasingly recognised in public service management, and this section builds on related approaches in Ireland<sup>9</sup> as well as international practice.

This approach ensures that the focus of major emergency management is on what is likely to occur in an area, that the scale of preparation is in proportion to the risks, and that the response to major emergencies builds out of normal response issues, such as resource mobilisation, co-ordination, decision-making, etc. In this way the risk assessment process can help establish confidence in the major emergency management system, by showing it to be both realistic and logical.

### 2.1 Carrying Out a Risk Assessment

This section of the Framework sets out a risk assessment procedure, which should be applied and documented by the principal response agencies as a basis for major emergency management. The risk assessment procedure underpins work in the later stages of the emergency management cycle.

**Each principal response agency should, in association with its partner principal response agencies, carry out a risk assessment in accordance with the procedures set down in this Section. The initial risk assessment should be reviewed and updated annually, or as circumstances require.**

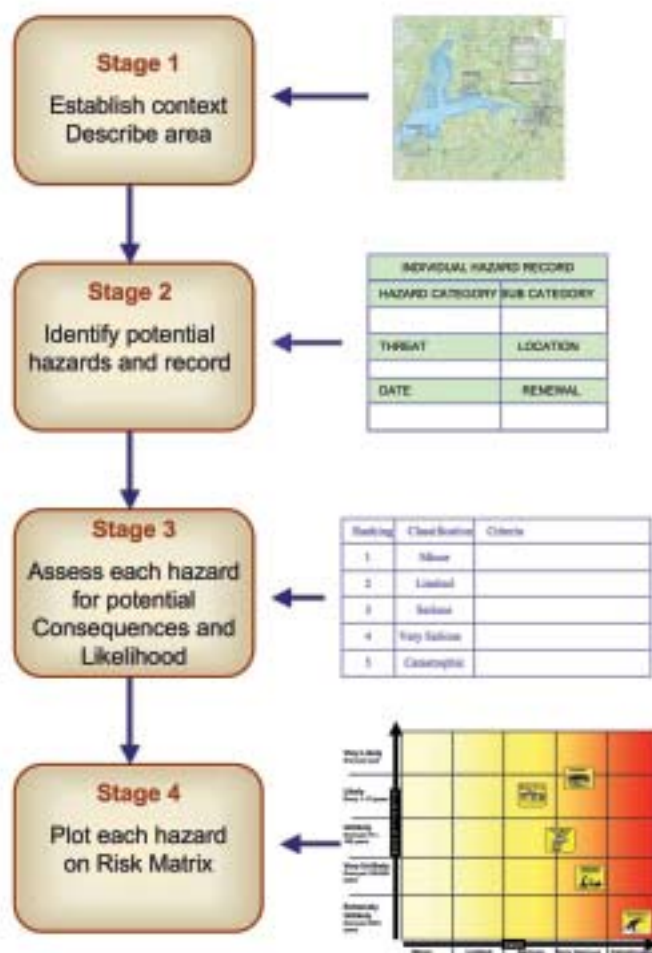
This risk assessment approach is complementary to the principle of an “All-Hazards” approach referred to in Section 1.6. Before describing the risk assessment process, a number of common terms for this aspect of emergency management are set out below. (See also Appendix F3.)

<b>Hazard:</b>	Any phenomenon with the potential to cause direct harm to members of the community, the environment or to the physical infrastructure, or being potentially damaging to the economic and social infrastructure.
<b>Impact:</b>	The consequences of a hazardous event being realised, expressed in terms of a negative impact on human welfare, damage to the environment or the physical infrastructure or other subsequent consequences.
<b>Risk:</b>	The combination of the likelihood of a hazardous event and its potential impact.

<sup>9</sup> Risk Management Guidance for Government Departments and Offices. Dept of Finance. March 2004



**FIGURE 2.1**  
**Schematic Risk Assessment Process**



## 2.2 The Risk Assessment Methodology

The risk assessment process set out in this section is comprised of a number of stages, as shown in Figure 2.1 above. Each stage of the process is described in the following sub-sections. Further guidance on the application of the inter-agency methodology is provided in the associated document *A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management*.

It is recommended that the risk assessment process should be carried out initially within each principal response agency, by first undertaking the procedure for its own functional area and from its own perspective. This work should then feed into the risk assessment process undertaken and documented by an inter-agency team, working under the aegis of the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. The relevant outcomes





from the regional process should be incorporated into each principal response agency's Major Emergency Plan.

### 2.2.1 Stage 1 - Establishing the Context.

The purpose of this stage is to describe the characteristics of the area for which the risk assessment is being completed, as this will influence the likelihood and the potential impact of any emergency. This is to better understand and to establish the area's vulnerability and resilience in the face of emergency.

The process should begin by establishing the context in which the risk assessment is taking place. The team undertaking the risk assessment exercise should consider the national, regional and local contexts which impact on major emergency management in their area. These views should be recorded in a series of short statements. To assist in this, the team should reflect on the following aspects of their area, considering emerging and potential future trends, in addition to the current situation. It will be appropriate also for the team to establish links with bodies who could provide relevant information/input for the risk assessment process. These could include bodies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Food Safety Authority (FSA), Port and Harbour Authorities, Airport Authorities, etc.

- **Social:** Describe the demographic, ethnic and socio-economic composition of the community. How are the various communities geographically distributed within the area? Are there any particularly vulnerable groups in the community? Are there annual events during which there is an influx of people into the area, e.g. Puck Fair or Slane Castle concerts? How experienced is the community at coping with different types of emergencies? Is there a strong volunteer/community support ethos?
- **Environment:** Is the area to be assessed urban, rural or mixed? Are there any particular local geographical or physical factors contributing to vulnerabilities? Are there particularly high-density areas? Are there specific environmentally sensitive/amenity areas? What is the history of events in or adjoining the area?
- **Infrastructure:** How is the infrastructure configured in the area - transport (road, rail, air, sea), utilities, business, etc? What are the critical supply networks in the area? Are there any sites in the area that are particularly critical for local, regional or national essential services (e.g. telecommunications hubs, power generation stations, fuel/energy supply, medical facilities, educational establishments, head offices of large public or commercial concerns)? What are the drivers of the economy in the area?

- 
- 
- **Hazardous sites:** What potentially hazardous sites exist in the area? Where are they located in relation to communities or sensitive environmental areas?

### 2.2.2 Stage 2 - Hazard Identification

The generic hazards that exist in all communities are sometimes taken for granted (e.g. fires, road traffic accidents, accidents involving hazardous materials). The purpose at this stage is to review and set down the generic hazards, including any features of those particular to the region, and then to add the hazards that are specific to the local area. Generally speaking, the hazards faced fall into four commonly used categories:

- Natural;
- Transportation;
- Technological; and
- Civil.

Further guidance on hazard identification and checklists using these four headings is provided as part of *A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management*.

For each identified hazard, the elements of the community that are at risk should be identified. Both the hazards to the community and the most likely points of impact should emerge from this stage. A standard hazard record sheet for recording information relating to individual hazards is given in *A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management*.

### 2.2.3 Stage 3 - Risk Assessment

The next stage is to consider the overall risks presented by these hazards. Risk assessment starts with an examination of the potential impact (severity of consequences to life and health, property and infrastructure, and the environment) of the hazards identified. The likelihood (probability) of the hazard occurring also has to be considered and the resulting judgement recorded on a risk matrix in the next stage. The basis for making this judgement should be set out on the individual hazard record sheet and should include sources which influence the judgement (e.g. national level intelligence and advice available from centres of expertise, information from risk holder/risk regulator, etc).

A five-point scale is proposed for categorising both impact and likelihood, ranging as shown in the risk matrix in Figure 2.2. In considering the potential impact of a hazard, it is relevant to take two factors into account - the type or nature of the impact, and the scale. The type or nature of impact may be considered in three fields:

- impact on life, health and residual welfare of a community;
- economic impact in terms of costs of property/infrastructure damage as well as recovery costs or loss of economic production;
- social/environmental impact. Social impact may be thought of in terms of disruption/displacement of people affected by the event, while environmental impact affects the physical area.

It is also important to take account of the potential for the escalation of an event after it has commenced or the combination of the specific hazard with other hazards.

A simple approach to assessing the likelihood of a hazardous event is proposed and is expressed in terms of the probability of such an event occurring. This should reflect the judgement of people involved in this field, rather than being a strict mathematical probability.

For each potential hazard identified in Stage 2, an individual hazard record sheet should be completed. The hazard record sheet provides a means of recording information about the hazard and its potential impact and likelihood, with a view to identifying an appropriate position on the risk matrix.

#### **2.2.4 Stage 4 - Recording Potential Hazards on a Risk Matrix**

The process proposed for recording the risk assessment is considered in this stage. A five by five matrix, using the scales for impact and their likelihood as discussed above, is illustrated in Figure 2.2 below. The outcome from the risk assessment should be recorded and inserted in the location judged to be most appropriate for the functional area under consideration. Multi-agency perspectives can help bring balance to this task. The risk assessment exercise records, in a readily presentable format, the combined judgement of the principal response agencies in regard to the identified hazards in the area.

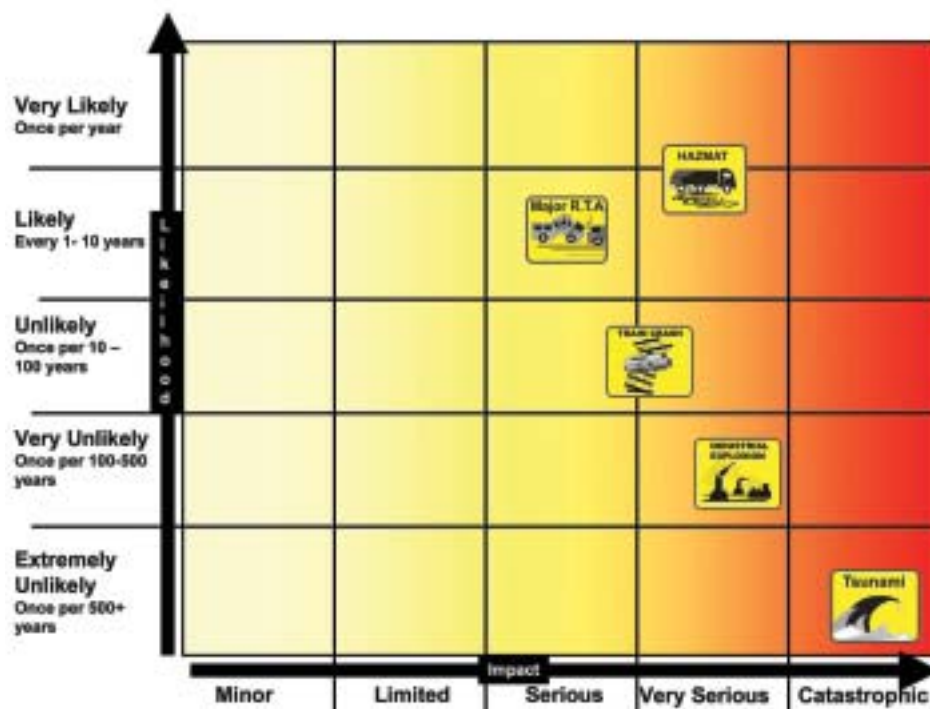
### **2.3 Using the Risk Assessment**

While being an intrinsically useful exercise in itself, the risk assessment also provides a sound basis for determining a range of steps at later stages of the emergency management cycle - especially in the Mitigation and the Planning and Preparedness stages.

The matrix discussed in Section 2.2.4 may be overlaid by a template, as shown in Figure 2.3(a) and 2.3(b) below, which shows how the risk assessment can place a potential hazard into either:

- the “normal” emergency zone;
- the major emergency zone, at the extremities of which are delineated two specific areas;

**FIGURE 2.2**  
**A Risk Matrix**



- a Prevent or Mitigate area, where prevention/mitigation of hazards is required
- a Disaster/Extendibility area, where hazards are extremely/very unlikely and do not therefore warrant specific preparedness, but can be responded to by extending the inter-agency arrangements of the major emergency regime

Risk assessment helps in selecting priorities for mitigation efforts by indicating those areas where risks are judged to be in the likely/very likely and very serious/catastrophic areas. This concept is developed further in Section 3.1

A further application of the risk assessment process is that it can provide a range of Major Emergency scenarios which form a sound basis for preparing the principal response agencies to meet the potential challenges which are likely to face them. This aspect is developed further in the preparedness stage in Section 4.

Issues relating to the recovery stage tend to be the least well developed aspect of emergency management. The same scenarios that are used for developing response preparedness may be further extended to highlight issues that can be reasonably anticipated to arise at the recovery stage.

FIGURE 2.3  
The Risk Matrix Zones (a)

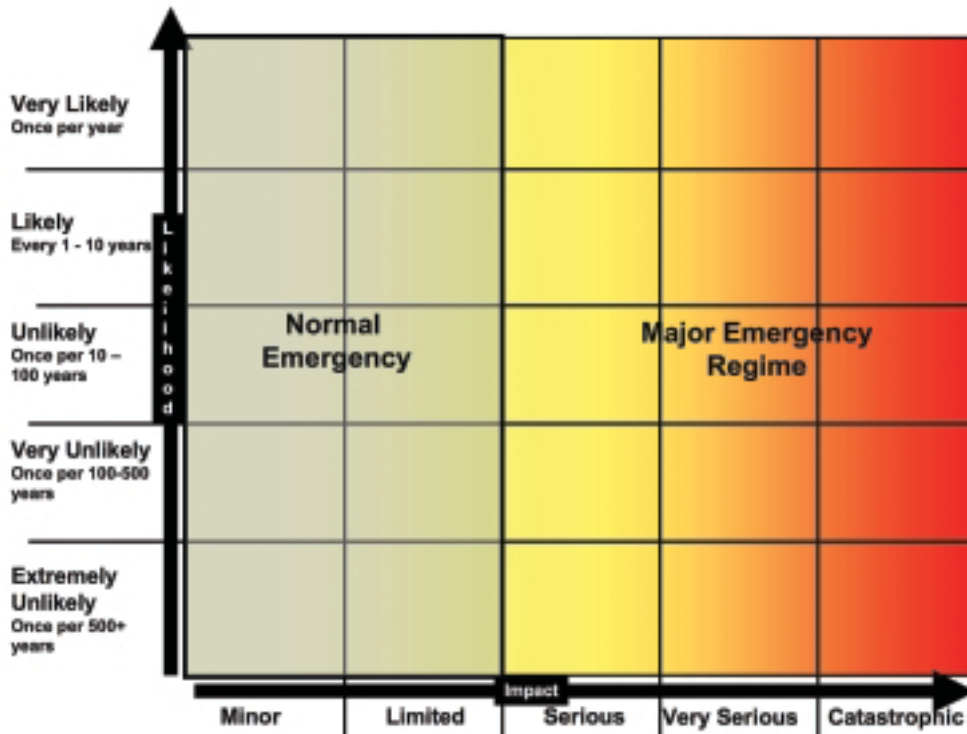
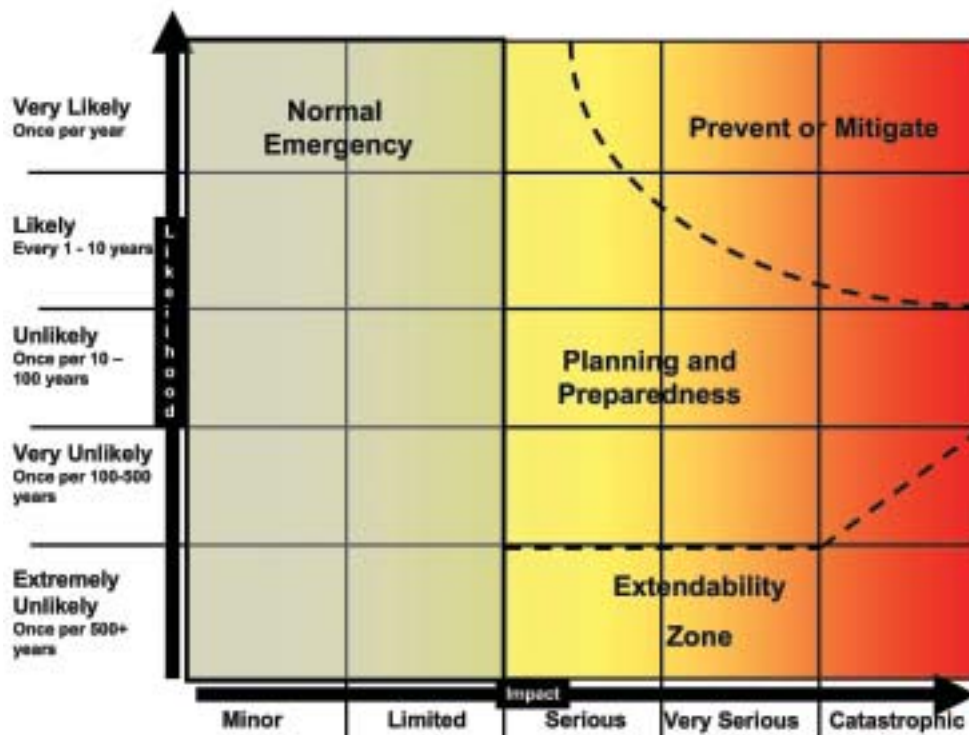


FIGURE 2.3  
The Risk Matrix Zones (b)





## Section 3: Mitigation/Risk Management

### 3.0 Introduction

Mitigation includes any actions which are taken in advance of the occurrence of an emergency to reduce the probability of that event happening or that reduce the loss/damage that might otherwise have been caused if the event does happen.

The most effective form of mitigation is the total elimination of the hazard concerned. Where elimination of the hazard is not feasible, mitigation can include efforts which:

- reduce the risk that the hazard will be realised;
- reduce the immediate impact of any emergency on the communities, regions or facilities threatened;
- reduce the risk that the event will result in an escalating emergency.

### 3.1 Prioritising Areas for Mitigation

The risk assessment process described in Section 2 guides the selection of priorities for mitigation efforts by indicating those areas where risks are judged to be in the likely / very likely categories and the very serious / catastrophic categories. Mitigation efforts may be focussed on moving the risk downward on the matrix (reducing the likelihood) if this is possible, or moving the risk to the left (reducing the impact if the hazardous event happens) as illustrated in Figure 3.1. This exercise should inform the risk management approach which may include the development of (multi-agency) planning, exercising and appropriate training, and regular review of the status of some risks. Consideration may also need to be given to the option of planning being specific to some risks as well as being generic.

**Each principal response agency should be actively involved in the mitigation of risk and should use the risk assessment process described in Section 2 to inform its mitigation work at both local and regional levels.**

### 3.2 Implementing Mitigation Measures

In general, responsibility for the mitigation of specific hazards lies with the organisations and companies which own and operate the facilities and services where the relevant hazards are found, such as airlines, railway companies, chemical manufacturers, etc. Such organisations are referred to as “risk holders”. There may also be statutory provisions, which provide for regulation/risk management, and bodies which hold responsibility in this regard are called “risk regulators”.

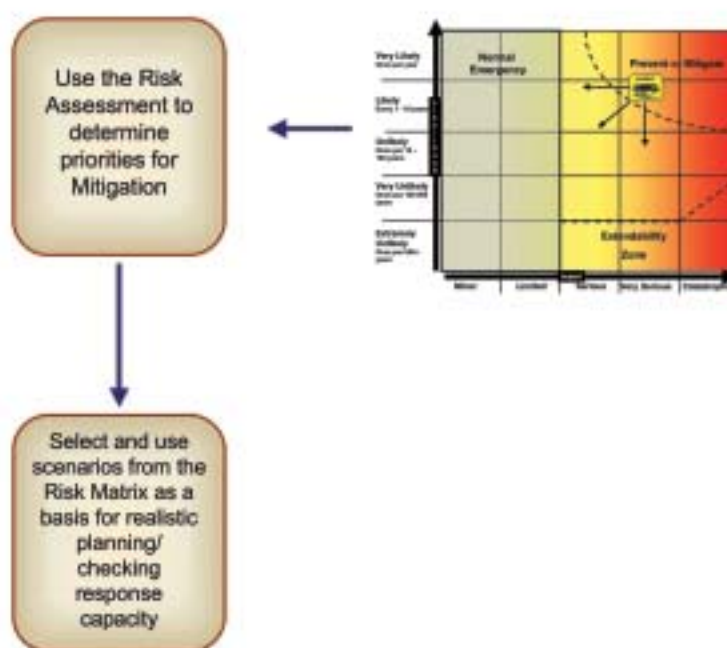
The principal response agencies may not be in a position to implement significant mitigation as part of the major emergency management process. However, An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities can be involved directly



in extensive mitigation of potential generic emergencies through their work as “risk regulators” in other areas. Typical examples include:

- the enforcement of legislation related to road safety and safety in places of assembly (An Garda Síochána);
- monitoring of food and water safety (the Health Service Executive); and
- control of development through the planning and building control process and the enforcement of fire safety and dangerous substance legislation (the Local Authorities).



**FIGURE 3.1**  
**Using the Risk Assessment as a Basis for Mitigation**



### 3.3 Co-ordination of Mitigation Efforts

The risk assessment process described in Section 2 should result in the identification of areas of significant concern for the principal response agencies. When documented, this should give a common view of the major risks in the area. This exercise should underpin:

- mitigation efforts within the remit of the three principal response agencies as discussed above;
- contact with “risk-holders”, with a view to mitigation of risk; and
- contact with other “risk-regulators”.



Mitigation of hazards should be on the agenda of each Regional Steering Group for Major Emergency Management. The priorities to be tackled and the approach to mitigation of specific hazards should be documented and progress updated routinely.

Where appropriate, the co-ordination arrangements of the Framework should be invoked and used to assist in the inter-agency mitigation efforts of the principal response agencies relating to public events, such as sporting events, festivals, large-crowd gatherings etc., as well as other situations requiring co-ordinated inter-service action, such as pollution/public health incidents and episodes.

### 3.4 Promoting Resilience

Resilience is the term used to describe the inherent capacity of communities, services and infrastructure to withstand the consequences of an incident, and to recover/restore normality.

**As part of the overall approach to mitigation, the principal response agencies should consider mechanisms to promote resilience in communities, services and infrastructure.**

#### 3.4.1 Resilient Communities


The capacity and experience of communities in dealing with emergencies and crises is one of the characteristics described in the contextual stage of the risk assessment process. The principal response agencies can play an important role in the development and strengthening of resilient communities as part of their mitigation efforts. Resilient communities are particularly important in coping with certain kinds of emergency, such as flooding<sup>10</sup> or those involving evacuation or sheltering.

Educating and informing the public on possible emergencies is a vital element of that process and the development of key messages for targeted audiences is an essential first step. These messages should typically include information on:

- the types of emergencies which are most likely;
- what is being done to protect the community;
- early warnings systems (where applicable);
- what you can do to protect yourself and your family;
- looking out for vulnerable neighbours;
- shelter/evacuate (“Go in, Stay in, Tune in”);

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<sup>10</sup> See the Office of Public Works (OPW) website [www.flooding.ie](http://www.flooding.ie) for appropriate information on preparation for, response to and recovery from flooding.

- 
- making a call for assistance using 999/112;
  - what to do if you happen upon an emergency;
  - how critical incident stress can affect you; and
  - where to get more information.

It is generally acknowledged that the public are most receptive to safety messages in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and when the messages are delivered by persons they trust. There are various methods which can be used to disseminate this type of message to the public, including local press, local radio, television, the Internet and the distribution of Public Information Leaflets.

Resilient communities can play a key role in the protection, rescue and care of any individuals within the community, who, because of dependency or disability, need particular attention during emergencies. Neighbours will be aware of any residents who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or with limited physical movement, whether by reason of age, illness (including mental illness), disability or other reasons, and can either assist such persons themselves or direct the emergency services towards them. Likewise, the attention of the emergency services can be drawn to any community hospitals, residential homes and care centres, where such individuals are present or resident, and where special arrangements may be required.

### **3.4.2 Resilient Services**



The principal response agencies need to consider the vulnerability of their own critical services, such as hospitals, water supply, communications, etc., which may be adversely affected by a crisis or emergency. Appropriate business continuity planning is needed to assess the likely risks to the principal response agency's key services, and to identify the actions which promote resilience.

Likewise, the principal response agencies need to identify the critical services, such as food, fuel and other essential supplies as well as transport, banking and communications services, provided by other organisations in their area, and should engage with the private sector to encourage business continuity planning and resilience development by the organisations involved.

### **3.4.3 Critical Infrastructure Protection**

The loss for an extended period of a major infrastructural element, such as an arterial road, main-line rail link, airport or sea-port, arising from an emergency, could have a major impact on the social and commercial life of a region.

Also, the significant technological development of recent years has created new levels of vulnerability and risk. An increased reliance on utilities and infrastructure (including



electricity, gas, water, sewerage, communications, as well as financial, business and transport services) implies an enhanced risk of failure. Furthermore, the increasing complexity and inter-dependency of such services also raises the possibility of multiple service failures, with crashes/ outages beyond the control of individual utilities.

Critical Infrastructure Protection is the term given to the development of resilience in the infrastructure on which modern, complex communities and economic wealth are built. While there are limits to the extent that the principal response agencies in any particular area can influence the protection of critical regional and national infrastructure, it is an important issue for consideration in an inter-agency context. The likely extent to which the Regional Steering Group for Major Emergency Management can be involved is to identify the critical infrastructure within their area along with any associated risks and bring them to the attention of the relevant risk holders / risk regulators.

## Section 4: Planning and Preparedness

### 4.0 Introduction

This section of the Framework deals with key aspects of planning and preparedness for major emergency response under two main headings:

- Major Emergency Plans, dealing with the format of new plans and linking Major Emergency Plans with other emergency plans;
- preparing to respond, which is further elaborated in:
  - major emergency management development programmes;
  - leadership in major emergency response;
  - roles of individuals and teams in major emergency response;
  - development, training and exercise programmes;
  - resource issues;
  - appraisal of preparedness.

### 4.1 Major Emergency Plans

#### 4.1.1 Preparing and Updating Major Emergency Plans

Since the mid-1980s the principal response agencies have prepared Major Emergency Plans in accordance with a standard framework<sup>11</sup>, which enables them to respond to incidents that fall within the definition of a major emergency. There is a need to develop this process to meet the requirements of major emergency management set out in the Framework.

**Each principal response agency should prepare an individual Major Emergency Plan which sets out its arrangements to respond to events occurring in, or impacting on, its functional area which require the declaration of a major emergency.**

**The updated Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed annually.**

#### 4.1.2 The Major Emergency Plan Format

To facilitate inter-agency arrangements, some regions of the country have adopted an approach of preparing joint Major Emergency Plans. However, while underpinning the need for an overall common approach, the Framework requires that each principal response agency should prepare its own individual Major Emergency Plan. The co-ordination arrangements of the Framework will be common to all agencies and mechanisms for ensuring that common arrangements are included in each Major Emergency Plan are set out below.

<sup>11</sup> Framework for Coordinated Response to Major Emergency, (November 1984)

**The Major Emergency Plan of each individual agency should be consistent with the arrangements set out in the Framework, should contain the section headings set out below and should conform with the further guidance in *A Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan*.**

This is to facilitate checking for inter-agency operability, as well as ensuring that the common arrangements to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination are included in all Major Emergency Plans. While elements will be common to all Major Emergency Plans, each plan should be developed/written from the individual principal response agency's perspective, setting out how it should perform its functions and how it should work with its partner principal response agencies and others in the response.

**Each principal response agency's individual Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed for inter-operability with the plans of its partner principal response agencies and for consistency with the Framework by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. Any issues arising from this review should be referred back to the principal response agency for appropriate action. In case of disagreement, which is not resolved by local discussion, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide the issue.**

The Major Emergency Plan of each principal response agency should include the section headings set out below.

- 1**     *Introduction to the Plan*
- 2**     *The Principal Response Agency and its Functional Area*
- 3**     *Risk Assessment for the Area*
- 4**     *Resources for Emergency Response*
- 5**     *Preparedness for Major Emergency Response*
- 6**     *The Command, Control and Co-ordination System*
- 7**     *The Common Elements of Response*
  - *Declaring a Major Emergency*
  - *Initial Mobilisation*
  - *Command, Control and Communication Centres*
  - *Co-ordination Centres*
  - *Communications Facilities*
  - *Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles*
  - *Public Information*
  - *The Media*
  - *Site Management Arrangements*

- *Mobilising Additional Resources*
- *Casualty and Survivor Arrangements*
- *Emergencies Involving Hazardous Materials*
- *Protecting Threatened Populations*
- *Early and Public Warning Systems*
- *Emergencies Arising on Inland Waterways*
- *Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations*
- *Logistical Issues/Protracted Incidents*
- *Investigations*
- *Community/VIPs/Observers*
- *Standing-Down the Major Emergency*

8 *Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans*

9 *Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination*

10 *Links with National Emergency Plans*

11 *Severe Weather Plans*

12 *Site- and Event-Specific Arrangements and Plans*

13 *The Recovery Phase*

14 *Review of the Major Emergency Plan*

15 *Appendices.*

#### 4.1.3 Functions of the Principal Response Agencies



The Framework assigns functions to each of the principal response agencies in major emergency response. In general, these assignments reflect the normal functions and competencies of the services involved. The assigned functions are set out in Appendix F5.

In addition to specific functions in response, the Framework also assigns responsibility for the co-ordination function to the different principal response agencies, depending on the nature of the emergency, through the lead agency arrangements set out in Section 5.4.2.

**Each principal response agency should prepare for and undertake the functions assigned to it in Appendix F5 of the Framework as part of the combined response to a major emergency.**

Few of the functions assigned to the individual agencies are, in fact, discharged in isolation. One of the main purposes of the Framework is to provide co-ordination arrangements to enable inter-agency issues to be decided quickly, and at the most appropriate level, in accordance with appropriate decision-making mandates (see Section 5.4.4). The Framework also provides for the sharing of information relating to the functions of each agency, so that there can be appropriate collaboration and cooperation.





Where specific difficulties (such as gaps or overlaps) arise in relation to assignment of functions or to inter-agency issues at the preparation stage, which are not resolved by local discussion, the National Steering Group should be informed and will consider and adjudicate on the issue. Where difficulties arise during a response situation, the final decision with respect to functions/inter-agency issues will lie with the mandated co-ordinator from the lead agency (see Section 5.4.4).

#### 4.1.4 Regional Level Co-ordination

The Framework provides for the development of both planning and response aspects of major emergency management in Ireland. In terms of planning, the current practice whereby preparedness is co-ordinated in a number of regions is adopted and applied to the entire country. This aspect is developed further in the section below.

In terms of response, under certain specific circumstances, regional level major emergencies may be declared, with a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination activated. This will provide for mutual aid, support and co-ordination facilities to be activated in a region, the boundaries of which are determined to suit the exigencies of the emergency.

##### 4.1.4.1 Regional Preparedness Arrangements

Building on good practice that has emerged over the years, the Framework requires that the principal response agencies, within defined regions, should work together to co-ordinate the inter-agency aspects of major emergency preparedness and management.

In keeping with current practice, the Framework provides that a Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management should be formed, comprising the senior personnel of the principal response agencies within each of the eight regions set out in Appendix F4.

**Each principal response agency should engage with and actively participate in the appropriate Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management as set out in Appendix F4.**

The primary role of the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management will be to ensure that:

- the regional aspects of preparedness set out in the Framework are delivered;
- an annual budget to support regional preparedness activities is provided;
- a regional level major emergency management development programme is prepared and implemented;
- a regional level risk assessment is carried out;

- appropriate mitigation steps are taken in respect of priority risks;
- a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is prepared;
- Local and Regional Co-ordination Centres are designated and developed; and
- each principal response agency's major emergency plan and preparedness assessment is reviewed and validated.

A Regional Working Group on Major Emergency Management should be established to support and progress major emergency management work in the region. The membership of the Regional Working Group on Major Emergency Management should be drawn from the key personnel in the principal response agencies. A Working Group Chair, who will report to the Regional Steering Group, should be appointed for a two-year term.

It will be necessary for the principal response agencies to provide support and personnel for the work of the Regional Steering and Working Groups. To achieve this it may be appropriate that one (or more, as appropriate) of the principal response agencies should act as a contracting authority on behalf of the Regional Steering Group, for instance, in the procurement of specific facilities or equipment. Similarly, it may be necessary for secondment or other appropriate arrangements to be made to enable personnel from the principal response agencies to work jointly on aspects of the regional major emergency management work programme.



Both the Regional Steering Group and the Working Group may invite others that they deem appropriate, such as the Defence Forces, the voluntary emergency services, utilities and private sector organisations, to attend and participate in their work.

Each Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management should be convened, chaired and serviced by one of the three principal response agencies, on an annual rotating basis, i.e. a Division of An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive Area and a Local Authority, in three-year rolling sequence.

The arrangements set out in this section are intended to ensure that co-ordination of inter-agency preparedness takes place in an effective manner. Nothing in these arrangements is intended to inhibit or discourage existing inter-agency collaboration on the basis of geographical sub-sets of these regions.

#### **4.1.4.2 Plans for Regional Level Co-ordination**

In certain circumstances, the Framework provides that the local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level. To provide for this, a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be developed and agreed by all of the principal response agencies within each of the eight emergency planning regions set out in Appendix F4.



Each principal response agency should, through the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management, participate in the preparation of a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination, which sets out its arrangements to respond at regional level. Each principal response agency should include relevant aspects of this Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination within its own Major Emergency Plan.

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be consistent with the arrangements set out in the Framework, and be prepared to conform with the guidance set out in *A Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan*.

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be reviewed on an annual basis.

While Appendix F4 sets out regions for co-ordinating inter-agency preparedness, it is considered that the use of similar boundaries to pre-define regional level response could be unduly restrictive and might not be appropriate for the reality of the emergency situation. For this reason, it is proposed that, where regional response arrangements need to be invoked, the architecture of the regional co-ordination structure and the boundaries of the region mobilised will be determined as set out in Section 5.4.5.4.


#### 4.2 Linking the Major Emergency Plan with National Emergency Plans

As well as being activated for local and regional-scale events, the structures and resources available within the Framework for Major Emergency Management may be activated by appropriate national bodies in certain circumstances. National bodies, operating in accordance with National Emergency Plans, may call upon the principal response agencies to assist in responding to, or to perform their normal functions/ roles arising from, a national level emergency<sup>12</sup>. The envisaged roles can include:

- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact of the emergency in the functional area of the agency;
- undertaking pre-assigned roles in National Emergency Plans, such as co-ordinating/implementing certain countermeasures in their functional area;
- undertaking relevant tasks following an emergency/crisis; or
- acting as a communications and co-ordination conduit.

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<sup>12</sup> Arrangements involving the principal response agencies in National Emergency Plans will be agreed in the first instance on their behalf through the National Steering Group.



Arrangements for mobilisation of Local Major Emergency Plans (including the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination) and co-ordination with National Emergency Plans are set out in *A Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan*. Three principal scenarios are envisaged:

- the Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies may be activated by one of those agencies on request from a body acting under the provisions of one of the following National Emergency Plans:
  - National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents,
  - Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Emergency Plan,
  - Animal Health Plan;
- the Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies may be activated by one of those agencies in response to a request from the Irish Coast Guard, following a threatened or actual emergency in the Irish Maritime Search and Rescue Region; or
- the Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies may be activated by one of those agencies in response to a request from a Minister of Government in light of an emergency/crisis situation.

**Each principal response agency should provide for working with appropriate national bodies and responding to and activating appropriate aspects of their Major Emergency Plan following requests arising from national emergency situations.**

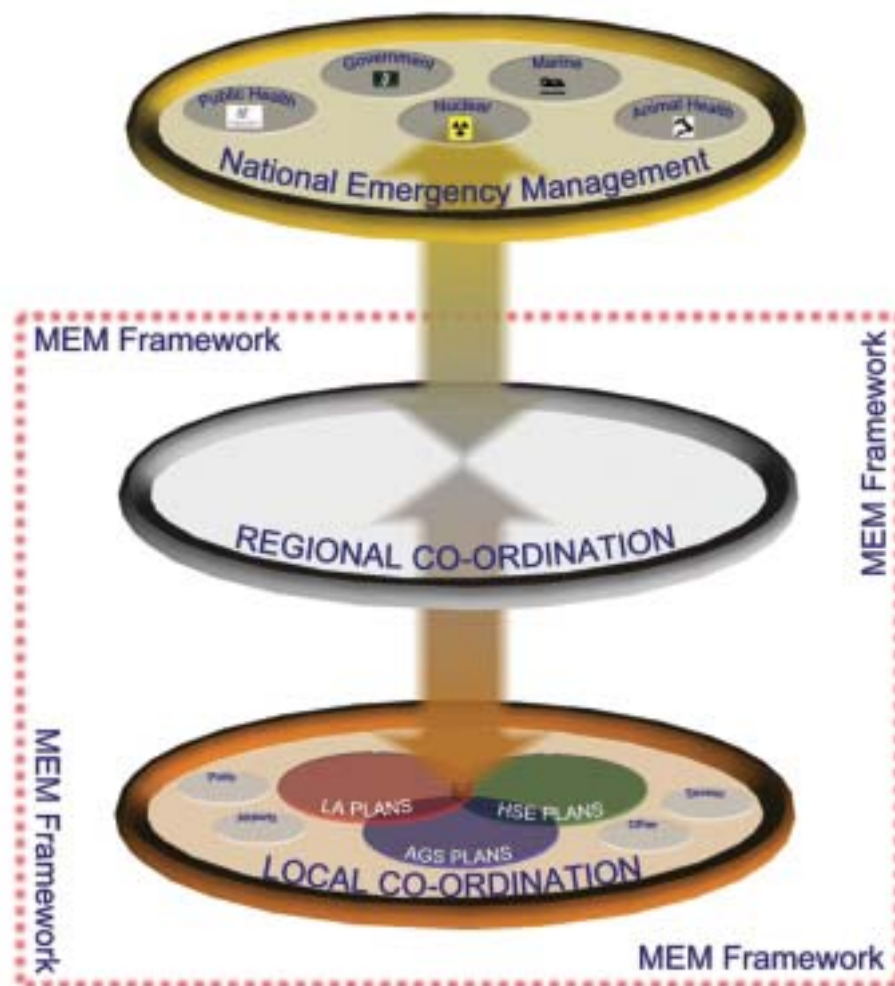
Figure 4.1 illustrates the linkage between Major Emergency Plans, National Plans and other plans.

### 4.3 Linking the Major Emergency Plan with Other Emergency Plans

#### 4.3.1 Severe Weather Plans

Severe weather emergencies may involve significant threats to infrastructure and support may be required for vulnerable sections of the community. Section 5.4.2 and Appendix F7 of the Framework provide that Local Authorities are the lead agency for co-ordinating the response to severe weather events. Arrangements put in place by Met Éireann to issue public service severe weather warnings to the Local Authorities are set out in Appendix F6. Not all severe weather events will be major emergencies, but the principles and arrangements for co-ordinated response to major emergencies should inform all response to severe weather events. Local Authorities should ensure that effective arrangements are in place to receive and respond promptly to public service severe weather warnings issued by Met Éireann.

**FIGURE 4.1**  
**Linking Major Emergency Plans with**  
**National Plans and Other Plans**



Each Local Authority should have, as a specific sub-plan of its Major Emergency Plan, a plan for responding to severe weather emergencies, whether a major emergency is declared or not. The Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres for Major Emergency Management may be activated to manage the response to a severe weather event, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

The other principal response agencies should include sub-plans for responding to notifications from the Local Authorities of severe weather warnings, whether a major emergency is declared or not, and carry out their normal functions in emergency management in such situations as well as participating in co-ordination groups.

#### 4.3.2 Site- and Event-Specific Emergency Plans

There are both legislative and procedural arrangements, which require that emergency plans be prepared for specific sites or events (e.g. SEVESO sites<sup>13</sup>, airports, ports, major sports events, etc.). Arising from the risk assessment process described in Section 2, each Major Emergency Plan should identify sites/events in the section where specific plans/arrangements exist for responding to emergencies. The generic response arrangements set out in the Major Emergency Plan will govern the principal response agencies' response to such sites/events, whether a major emergency is declared or not. It should be confirmed in each Major Emergency Plan that complementary sub-plans/standard operating procedures are in place for specific sites and events.

Bodies/agencies which are required to prepare site- or event-specific emergency plans should be guided by the Framework in interacting with the principal response agencies.

**With its regional partners, each principal response agency should review site- and event-specific emergency plans for consistency with its Major Emergency Plans, in conjunction with site and/or event emergency plan owners and appropriate regulatory bodies.**

#### 4.3.3 Ports and Harbours

For all ports, the Harbours Act, 1996, places responsibility on the harbour master for the safety of shipping and all activities within the defined port limits. The legislation also requires that emergency plans be prepared in respect of the major ports. These emergency plans are designed generally to deal with incidents, in the first place using the port's own resources. The Irish Coast Guard is responsible for co-ordinating the response to marine incidents outside port limits, except in case of search and rescue, when all marine areas, including ports, are within its remit.

Where necessary, the harbour master will request the assistance of the principal emergency services. The harbour master is available to provide specialist marine knowledge to assist the principal emergency services in making a response. Where appropriate, a major emergency may be declared by the principal response agencies.

Each port is also required to prepare an oil pollution plan to deal with oil pollution incidents, and responsibility for implementing the plan rests with the harbour master.

Where SEVESO sites are located in a harbour, the port authority is a local competent authority and as such is included in the relevant external emergency planning process.

<sup>13</sup> Chemical Plants falling within the remit of the SEVESO Regulations; The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, give effect to Council Directive 96/82/EC and 2003/105/EC.





#### 4.3.4 Airports

Airports are required by International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) rules to prepare emergency plans and to maintain emergency services commensurate with the categories of aircraft using the airport.

Airport authorities generally request the attendance of the principal emergency services at alerts, incidents and exercises occurring at airports. Where appropriate, a major emergency may be declared by the principal response agencies.

#### 4.4 Preparing to Respond

##### 4.4.1 Major Emergency Development Programmes

The provisions of the Framework and the tasks arising from the new major emergency management arrangements will involve a significant level of development activity, both within the individual principal response agencies and jointly with their regional partners. In parallel with risk assessment and mitigation processes and the preparation of Major Emergency Plans, each principal response agency should initiate an internal programme to develop its level of preparedness, so that in a major emergency it will be in a position to respond in an efficient and effective manner and discharge the assigned functions in accordance with the Framework.

**Each principal response agency should initiate and document a major emergency development programme to ensure that it has all necessary arrangements, systems, people and resources in place to discharge the functions assigned to it by the Framework and set out in its Major Emergency Plan. After the initial programme, other programmes to maintain the level of preparedness should be prepared and implemented on a three year cycle.**

**Each Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management should initiate and document a regional-level major emergency development programme to ensure that all necessary arrangements, systems, facilities and resources are in place to discharge the functions assigned by the Framework.**

##### 4.4.2 Leadership in Major Emergency Management

The relevant Chief Superintendent of each Division of An Garda Síochána, the designated Senior Manager in each Health Service Executive Area and the City or County Manager of each Local Authority is responsible for the principal response agency's major emergency management arrangements and preparedness, as well as for the effectiveness of the agency's response to any major emergency which occurs in its functional area. The Framework makes explicit the expectations in regard both to preparedness and response.



**The Chief Superintendent, designated Senior Manager in each Health Service Executive Area and the City or County Manager<sup>14</sup> should:**

- ensure that a development programme is put in place and implemented within the principal response agency;
- ensure that staff are trained for key roles, and that competent staff are matched/assigned to key roles;
- ensure that the function of leading major emergency preparedness within the principal response agency is assigned to a competent officer;
- participate, as appropriate, in the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management;
- ensure that a development programme is put in place and implemented at regional level;
- ensure that the principal response agency's participation in inter-agency major emergency preparedness is assigned to a competent officer; and
- lead the principal response agency's response to a major emergency.

#### **4.4.3 Scoping the Agency's Preparedness**

It is important from two perspectives that a realistic approach is taken to dimensioning the scale of preparedness of the principal response agency. Firstly, the principal response agency's preparedness should enable it to respond effectively to the scenarios which it is most likely to encounter. Secondly, the emphasis of the Framework is on bringing the full capacity of the principal response agencies to bear effectively on a major emergency situation and extending this where necessary, rather than creating extra capacity for very unlikely scenarios.

The scenarios selected from the risk assessment process in Section 2 should be the guide to determine the level of response to prepare for. The scenarios should provide a realistic means of considering how available resources are matched to the identified hazards. If gaps are identified, part of the preparedness cycle should involve identifying where necessary additional resources may be obtained in an emergency and ensuring that arrangements are in place to mobilise them.

**Each principal response agency should "walk through" a selection of scenarios identified in the risk assessment matrix on an annual basis as a means of reviewing its preparedness to respond to major emergencies and should ensure that the resources necessary to perform functions at anticipated levels are in place or can be mobilised in the region or from other identified sources.**

<sup>14</sup> This reference should be taken to include those deputising or acting in a temporary capacity in these positions.

#### 4.4.4 Key Roles and Support Teams in Major Emergency Response

The effectiveness of the response to any major emergency will depend on the individuals within the organisations who undertake specific key co-ordination and lead roles. The key roles identified in the Framework include -

- Controller of Operations (see Section 5.3.2)
- On-Site Co-ordinator (see Section 5.4.2)
- Chair of Crisis Management Team (see Section 5.4.5.3)
- Chair of Local Co-ordination Group (see Section 5.4.5.2)
- Chair of Regional Co-ordination Group (see Section 5.4.5.4)
- Information Management Officers (see Section 5.4.6.3)
- Media Liaison Officers (see Section 5.4.7.2)
- Action Management Officers (see Section 5.4.6.5).

A fundamental element of major emergency preparedness is to ensure that competent individuals are identified, trained and matched to these key roles in the response and formally nominated for these roles. Arrangements should also be made to ensure that suitable alternatives to persons in key roles are available.

**Each principal response agency should identify, match and formally nominate competent individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in its Major Emergency Plan.**

The Framework also provides that teams be formed to support and assist individuals operating in key roles. Operational Protocols, detailing the membership and alternates, roles, methods of operation, etc. for support team functioning should be prepared.

**Each principal response agency should put support teams in place for key roles and should prepare Operational Protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support teams to be mobilised and function in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Major Emergency Plan.**

The functions and responsibilities associated with the key roles (see also decision-making mandates in Section 5.4.4) should be clearly identified and set down in the agency's internal documentation and referenced in the Major Emergency Plan. For instance, in the case of the Controller of Operations (see Section 5.3.2), this should provide for:

- the process for nominating and empowering the Controller of Operations and for ensuring availability of a series of competent controllers;

- the process for handover of the function of Controller of Operations within that agency; and
- the provision of a support team and space for the Controller of Operations to exercise the role.

**Each principal response agency should document the assignment of key roles and how those roles are to be delivered.**

#### 4.4.5 Sub-Plans/ Procedures/ Code Instructions<sup>15</sup> for Functions

Each principal response agency needs to consider how it will perform the functions assigned to it by the Framework. As functions assigned reflect the normal competencies of the principal response agencies, the working arrangements may already be developed and codified at local, regional or national level and the appropriate resources may already be in place. To ensure that all aspects are covered, it is recommended that:

**Each principal response agency should revise/update and develop as necessary its Sub-Plans/Procedures/Code Instructions to enable its different sections and services to perform the functions assigned to the agency by the Framework. The full list of Sub-Plans/Procedures/Code Instructions should be listed in an Appendix to the Major Emergency Plan.**

It may be necessary for some Sub-Plans/Procedures/Code Instructions to be developed on a bi-lateral basis between different principal response agencies, for example between An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive on the transfer of casualty information. Where this is the case, common Sub-Plans/Procedures/Instructions should be developed at the highest appropriate level.

Where considered appropriate, Action Cards should be developed for key roles and individuals.

### 4.5 Staff Development, Training and Exercise Programmes

#### 4.5.1 Development of Staff for Major Emergency Management Roles

The development of staff for the major emergency response function is critical to the goal of effective and co-ordinated response. Allied with the major emergency development programmes, referred to in Section 4.4.1 above, each principal response agency should undertake an appropriate staff training programme, which will underpin the capacity of

<sup>15</sup> Garda Code Instructions is a document containing instructions, legislation and regulations, processes and procedures in respect of the day-to-day management of An Garda Síochána.



the agency and the nominated individuals within it to discharge the functions assigned to them.

The development cycle includes creating awareness, providing appropriate training, assessing competencies and matching individuals with roles appropriate to their strengths, exercising to enhance and assess capability, and reviewing and revising staff assignments and training programmes. Given the turnover of personnel, agencies will need to assess their situation at regular intervals. The requirements and activity in this area should be documented as part of the normal business planning process.

**Each principal response agency should prepare and implement a staff development and training programme, designed to build the knowledge, skills and experience of staff that will fill key roles in the response to a major emergency. This programme should be revised periodically.**


#### **4.5.2 Assignment of Staff to Major Emergency Management Roles**

Staff assigned to key roles should develop competence, in terms of the knowledge, skills and experience which will assist them in the performance of their roles under the kind of pressures that a major emergency can bring.

**Every individual with an assigned role should consider, within their normal performance management and development system, how well they fit with the requirements for assigned roles.**

As major emergencies are rare events, individuals are unlikely to have previous experience of being involved in a major emergency response. The headings listed below will assist staff in appraising their stage of development for assigned roles:

- general work experience/ normal functions which may be beneficial for roles in major emergency management;
- specific work experience in the major emergency management field;
- relevant general training undertaken;
- attendance at relevant workshops/ seminars etc.;
- specific major emergency management training undertaken;
- involvement and roles in major emergency exercises;
- general relevant education;
- specific relevant education; and
- self-learning/ reading in the field.



Performance management, training and exercises should provide feedback, which enables individuals to further develop individual strengths and to address weaknesses identified.

**Each principal response agency should ensure that there is a match between the requirements of key roles and the competency of the staff assigned to them.**

#### 4.5.3 Agency Training Programmes

Training is a key element in the development of preparedness for agencies so as to ensure that they can provide an effective, co-ordinated response to major emergencies when required. There are many levels of training, ranging from general awareness of the major emergency management arrangements to equipping people with knowledge and skills to perform key roles. All training should be consistent with the provisions of the Framework and the specifics of the Major Emergency Plan.

**Each principal response agency should have a comprehensive training programme in place for those holding key roles in the major emergency response as well as those who will make contributions via support teams.**

*A Guide to Major Emergency Training Programmes* is designed to assist principal response agencies in developing and delivering training programmes.



#### 4.5.4 Exercises

Exercises are used to raise awareness, educate individuals on their roles and the roles of others and promote co-ordination and cooperation, as well as validating plans, systems and procedures. Exercises should be run as part of a continuous programme.

The quality of an exercise does not depend upon size/scale – the crucial aspect is the selection of the exercise objectives and the extent to which the exercise is organised, run and used to improve the emergency management process in line with these objectives. Multiple objectives may be catered for around a single exercise event.

Exercises can potentially be both expensive and disruptive; in particular, staging large-scale and ambitious exercises without an enabling regime of training and skills development can be wasteful and counter-productive. There is a need to ensure that maximum benefit is obtained for the effort involved. The quality of evaluation and identification of learning points is crucial.

Tabletop and walk-through exercises can realise objectives as well as large scale “live” or “field” events. In particular, the scenarios from the risk assessment process in Section 2 can be “walked through” from initiation to completion with good effect. This type of



approach enables the impact of the response arrangements in place to be appraised and further developed where found necessary.

**Each principal response agency should have an internal exercise programme on a three-year cycle with clearly defined and progressive objectives in place to validate its preparedness for responding to major emergencies.**

#### **4.5.5 A Joint Approach to Training and Exercises**

As well as individual agency training, there are major benefits in the principal response agencies adopting a combined/joint approach at the regional level to the design and delivery of development, training and exercises. The major advantage of this approach is that people who need to work together to manage major emergencies have an opportunity to work with and get to know their counterparts in other agencies before encountering them at a major emergency. They can also develop/get a closer understanding of how the functions of others impact on them and vice versa, through joint training and exercises. There are efficiencies also in joint training and exercise work, which allows much broader participation and peer observation.

**Each principal response agency should participate in developing and running joint/inter-agency training and exercise programmes with its partner agencies in the Major Emergency Region and a co-ordinated programme which dovetails with the internal programme referred to above should be prepared and agreed, based on a three-year cycle.**

#### **4.5.6 Third Party Exercises**

Third party organisations sometimes wish to have the principal response agencies participate in their emergency exercises. These can present an opportunity for the principal response agencies to benefit, but on other occasions they can be a burden on scarce resources. There will be little potential return to the principal response agencies where the development of the exercise objectives does not include their input. In particular, exercises which are set up by third parties to test the “turnout” of the principal emergency services or primarily for their public relations purposes will contribute little to the development of capacity. While principal response agencies will generally want to assist, exercises with third parties should, in general, be factored in as part of the regional exercise programme. Contact at the earliest opportunity is essential, and principal response agencies should ensure that they have significant input to determining the exercise objectives, in return for their involvement.



## 4.6 Resource Issues

### 4.6.1 Resources for Preparedness

Resources need to be allocated to the preparedness stages and each principal response agency should provide a budget for major emergency preparedness as part of their normal budgets.

**Each principal response agency should provide a budget for major emergency preparedness, which reflects the expenditure required to meet the costs of implementing the agency's internal preparedness, as well as the agency's contribution to the regional level inter-agency preparedness.**

### 4.6.2 Procurement and Resources for Response



While major emergencies are, by definition, rare events, which overwhelm normal capability, it is essential that clear arrangements are in place to authorise the procurement and use of resources in the response to a major emergency. By definition, resources will not have been budgeted by the principal response agencies for the response to a major emergency.

It may be necessary to procure goods or services immediately to deal with the emergency. Designated officers, including Controllers of Operations, should be authorised to procure such goods or services and deploy resources necessary to deal with the situation when a major emergency is declared and where the normal procurement processes are not relevant or applicable.

Costs arising for the principal response agencies and third party costs incurred in the response to a declared major emergency will, in practice, have to be met initially by the agencies. However, the arrangements by which a principal response agency can recoup its expenditure or be credited at a future budget allocation need to be considered/developed to ensure that resource/control issues do not negatively impact on the response to a major emergency.

Where a principal response agency responds as part of a National Emergency Plan, or one of the other circumstances set out in Section 4.2., its costs should be met by the body declaring the National Emergency or seeking their assistance, unless provided otherwise in a Memorandum of Understanding or by Government direction. The principal response agency should put arrangements in place to prepare certified expenditure records to support an application for recoupment or inclusion in supplementary or future budgets.





**Each principal response agency should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to authorise procurement and use of resources (including engaging third parties) to assist in response to major emergencies and to record and control the deployment of its own additional and third party resources for later recoupment.**

## **4.7 Major Emergency Preparedness Appraisal**

### **4.7.1 Undertaking an Appraisal**

It is important that an assessment of preparedness is carried out by each principal response agency as the development programme referred to in Section 4.4.1 is implemented. The assessment process should assist agencies to review, monitor and assess their own activities, to identify issues which may need to be addressed and consider what measures they could adopt to improve preparedness, as part of the major emergency development programmes.

**Each principal response agency should carry out and document an annual appraisal of its preparedness for major emergency response when the Framework is in use.**

Likewise, the level of inter-agency preparedness in the region should be appraised annually by the principal response agency holding the chair of the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management.

**An annual appraisal of the regional level preparedness for inter-agency major emergency response should be prepared by the principal response agency holding the chair of the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management when the Framework is in use.**

### **4.7.2 Assessment Tools**

To assist in this task, further advice and guidance and assessment tools will be provided as part of *A Guide to Undertaking an Appraisal*. It is anticipated that each principal response agency will complete the appraisal on a self-assessment basis. While the format is self-assessment, answers should be evidence-based – written evidence should be referenced which supports the answers (e.g. exercise reports, etc.). The assessment tools will be set out in three main parts:



### **Emergency management - enablers**

This part is intended to address enablers - basic organisational supports for major emergency management activity. Answers should be based on the arrangements in place in the agency.

### **Emergency management - internal**

This part seeks more detailed information on the measures in place and actions taken to underpin the preparedness for a major emergency in the organisation or the area, drawing on the main headings in the Framework. In the main, factual information is sought, with yes/no answers, dates, or specific information required. Again, written evidence which supports the answers should be referenced.

### **Emergency management – inter-agency**

This part focuses primarily on arrangements in place and actions taken to achieve co-ordination of the three principal response agencies, as well as co-ordination with other services.

#### **4.7.3 Review and Validation of the Appraisal**

The output from each principal response agency's preparedness assessment should be reported to and considered by relevant bodies, which should identify any necessary actions and highlight these to the agency involved.

**Each principal response agency's appraisal should be reviewed and validated by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. Each agency's appraisal should also be reviewed and validated by the relevant parent Department in the case of the Local Authorities and by the national headquarters, in consultation with the parent Department, in the case of Divisions of An Garda Síochána and Health Service Executive Areas, in accordance with the normal appraisal/reporting relationships within that sector. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the principal response agency for appropriate action. In case of disagreement between a principal response agency and a Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide on the issue.**

**The regional level report should be reviewed and validated by the National Steering Group. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management for appropriate action.**

## Section 5: *Delivering a Co-ordinated Response*

### 5.0 Introduction

This section of the framework addresses the key aspects of the response phase of a Major Emergency. The major elements of response include:

- Declaration of a Major Emergency;
- Mobilisation of Resources;
- Command, Control and Co-ordination of Response;
- Information Management Systems;
- Management of the Site of the Emergency;
- Casualty Management;
- Protecting Exposed Populations; and
- Public Information.

### 5.1 Declaring the Major Emergency

An onerous and difficult task falls on those in charge of the first response to the site of any large scale emergency. In order that the incident is optimally managed, it is vital that the highest-ranking member of each of the first emergency teams to arrive on site carries out a situation appraisal. It is the task of these individuals to survey the site and accumulate all available information which may be used to decide if his/her agency's procedures for declaring a major emergency should be activated.

The process used to determine if a major emergency is to be declared should be specified in each agency's Major Emergency Plan. Each principal response agency should have personnel authorised and trained in the procedures for declaring a major emergency. The person making the declaration should ensure that the declaration is notified to the heads of all services on site, as well as informing the relevant command, control or communication centres<sup>16</sup>. Each principal response agency should have a Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure<sup>17</sup> included to its Major Emergency Plan. A command, control or communication centre that receives such a major emergency declaration should,

<sup>16</sup> Various terms including command centre, control centre, communications centre and combinations thereof, are used by the individual principal emergency services to describe the buildings where 999/112 assistance calls from the public are received, where appropriate emergency services resources are mobilised and where radio contact is maintained with emergency service units in the field. For ease of reference, the phrase command, control or communication centre is used to denote these centres and to distinguish them from the network of co-ordination centres described by the Framework.

<sup>17</sup> A Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should be appended to every Major Emergency Plan. The task of implementing the Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should be assigned to a command, control or communications centre with the capacity to make contact with the staff/resources/facilities which are to be mobilised. The Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should spell out the order of mobilisation, and may include for cascade mobilisation.

in accordance with the mobilisation procedure, notify the other principal response agencies. Each principal response agency has the responsibility to alert its own staff via its internal mobilisation procedure. A typical message to declare a major emergency should be in the following format:

This is .....(name, rank and service).....

A .....(type of incident)..... has occurred/is imminent at .....(location).....

As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists.

Please activate the mobilisation arrangements in the.....(agency)..... Major Emergency Plan.

After the declaration is made the officer should then use the mnemonic METHANE to structure and deliver an information message.



**M Major Emergency Declared**  
**E Exact Location of the emergency**  
**T Type of Emergency (Transport, Chemical, etc.)**  
**H Hazards, present and potential**  
**A Access/egress routes**  
**N Number and types of Casualties**  
**E Emergency services present and required**

## 5.2 Initial Mobilisation

Each agency's Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure should be implemented immediately on notification of the declaration of a major emergency.

In some situations, there may be an early warning of an impending emergency. Mobilisation within an individual principal response agency may include moving to a standby/alert stage for some of its services or specific individuals, until the situation becomes clearer. Each principal response agency should provide for this stage, as appropriate, in its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure.

Similarly, information may be available which suggests that an emergency has happened, although location or details may not be known (such as in the case of a missing aircraft). The co-ordination of search missions is carried out by three organisations in Ireland - Irish Coast Guard for all marine incidents, Irish Aviation Authority for aircraft incidents, until



such time as the position of the aircraft is established, and An Garda Síochána for all other incidents. The principal emergency services should be prepared to respond as tasked to participate in search missions.

There will be circumstances where the resources or expertise of agencies other than the principal response agencies will be required. In these situations the relevant arrangements outlined in the Major Emergency Plan will be invoked. No third party should respond to the site of a major emergency unless mobilised by one of the principal response agencies through an agreed procedure.

### 5.3 Command, Control and Co-ordination of Response

This part of the Framework sets out the working relationships between the various elements which make up the response. The phrases command, control and co-ordination are used to describe the hierarchy of relationships, and to establish decision-making arrangements. While these terms may have different uses in different settings, terms in the Framework have the meanings assigned below (see also Appendix F3):

- **Command** – meaning the process of directing the operations of all or part of a particular service (or group of services), by giving direct orders;
- **Control** – meaning the process of influencing the activity of a service or group of services, by setting tasks, objectives or targets, but without the authority to give direct orders;
- **Co-ordinate** - meaning to bring the different elements of a complex activity or organisation into an efficient relationship through a negotiated process. In an emergency context this may include the mandate/authority to make certain decisions in pre-defined areas, where a normal consensual approach does not appear to meet the needs of an emergency situation;
- **Co-operate** - meaning to work together towards the same end; and
- **Collaborate** – meaning to work jointly on an activity.

#### 5.3.1 Command and Control Arrangements on Site

This section deals with command and control arrangements within individual services of the principal response agencies, or other services responding to a major emergency. The Framework provides that:

- each principal response agency exercises command over its own resources in accordance with its normal command structure, command systems and arrangements;
- each principal response agency should exercise control over:

- its own services operating at the site; and
- other services (other than the other principal response agencies) which it mobilises to the site.

The Framework recognises that there are usually a number of levels of command and control of emergency operations at large and/or complex incidents. These include Strategic Level, Tactical Level and Operational Level, which are catered for within existing command and control systems to varying degrees, with officers empowered to make decisions appropriate to these levels. (These command and control levels are referred to in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as Gold, Silver and Bronze Command/Control levels).

### 5.3.2 Controller of Operations

This section deals with control arrangements for all services within a principal response agency and also control arrangements for third parties mobilised to the site.

For this purpose, each principal response agency should have a “Controller of Operations” at the site (or at each site) of the emergency. The officer in command of the initial response of each principal emergency service should be the principal response agency’s Controller of Operations until relieved through the agency’s pre-determined process.

The role of the Controller of Operations is:

- to control the activities of his/her agency’s services at the site, including making such decisions as are appropriate to the role;
- to undertake the role of “On-Site Co-ordinator” (see Section 5.4.5.1) where the service s/he represents is identified as the lead agency (see Section 5.4.2), to chair the On-Site Co-ordination Group and operate an On-Site Co-ordination Centre;
- where another service is the lead agency, the Controller of Operations should ensure his/her agency’s operations are co-ordinated with the other principal response agencies, including ensuring secure communications with all agencies responding to the emergency site, and participate fully in the site co-ordination activity, and the establishment of a site management layout in accordance with the typical arrangements in the Framework;
- to request the attendance of such services as are needed and to exercise control over such services as the Controller’s agency has requested to attend;
- to designate and operate a “Holding Area” to which personnel from his/her agency will report on arrival at the site of the emergency and from which they will be deployed;
- to requisition any equipment s/he deems necessary to deal with the incident;

- to seek such advice as s/he requires;
- to maintain a log of his/her agency's activity at the incident site and decisions made;
- to contribute to and ensure that information management systems operate, including briefing his/her own principal response agency's Crisis Management Team on the handling of the emergency; and
- to control and integrate into the overall response any agency/service which s/he mobilises to assist in a major emergency.

In certain situations, e.g. where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the borders of Divisions of An Garda Síochána or areas of the Health Service Executive or of the Local Authorities, there may be response from multiple units of the principal response agencies. There should be only one Controller of Operations for each of the three principal response agencies and it is necessary to determine from which unit of the principal response agency the Controller of Operations should come.

An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive are national organisations and issues relating to identifying the Controller of Operations for those services (and the lead agency in consequence) will be determined internally, generally in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services or by referring the question to an appropriate higher level.

In the case of Local Authorities, which are statutorily empowered in respect of their functional areas, procedures for resolving such issues may already be set out in what are referred to as Section 81 agreements. Where they are not so covered and the issue cannot be resolved quickly in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services, the Local Authority Controller of Operations should be the designated person from the Local Authority whose rostered senior fire officer was first to attend the incident.


**Each Controller of Operations at a multi-authority response site should ensure that each authority is represented on his/her Controller's support team. Each agency should continue to exercise command over its own services as provided for in Section 5.3.1 above.**

## 5.4 Co-ordination Arrangements

### 5.4.1 Introduction

In international best practice, the co-ordination of the efforts of all services is recognised as a vital element in successful response to major emergencies. One of the key objectives





of the Framework, as stated in Section 1, is to set out the arrangements and facilities for effective co-ordination of the individual response efforts of the principal response agencies to major emergencies, so that the combined result is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

The key to achieving this objective is to recognise co-ordination of response as a specific function in emergency management. The Framework assigns responsibility for undertaking the co-ordination function clearly and unambiguously and requires it to be supported, so that it happens and is effective.

#### 5.4.2 The Lead Agency Concept

The Department of Defence's *Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance*<sup>18</sup> introduced the concept of assigning lead roles to Government Departments in emergency planning in Ireland. The Framework extends that concept to the principal response agencies and provides that the lead agency should be identified and assigned the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function in local and regional scale major emergencies.

The Framework provides that one of the three principal response agencies will be designated as the lead agency for any emergency and thereby assume responsibility for leading co-ordination. In general, therefore, while the responsibility for co-ordination may be shared, in any given situation responsibility for leading cooperation belongs specifically to one of the three principal response agencies. The lead agency has both the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function.

The mechanisms for determining and designating the lead agency in any situation are set out below. Two mechanisms, which should be applied in sequence by the three Controllers of Operations at the site, are envisaged to determine the lead agency for any emergency.

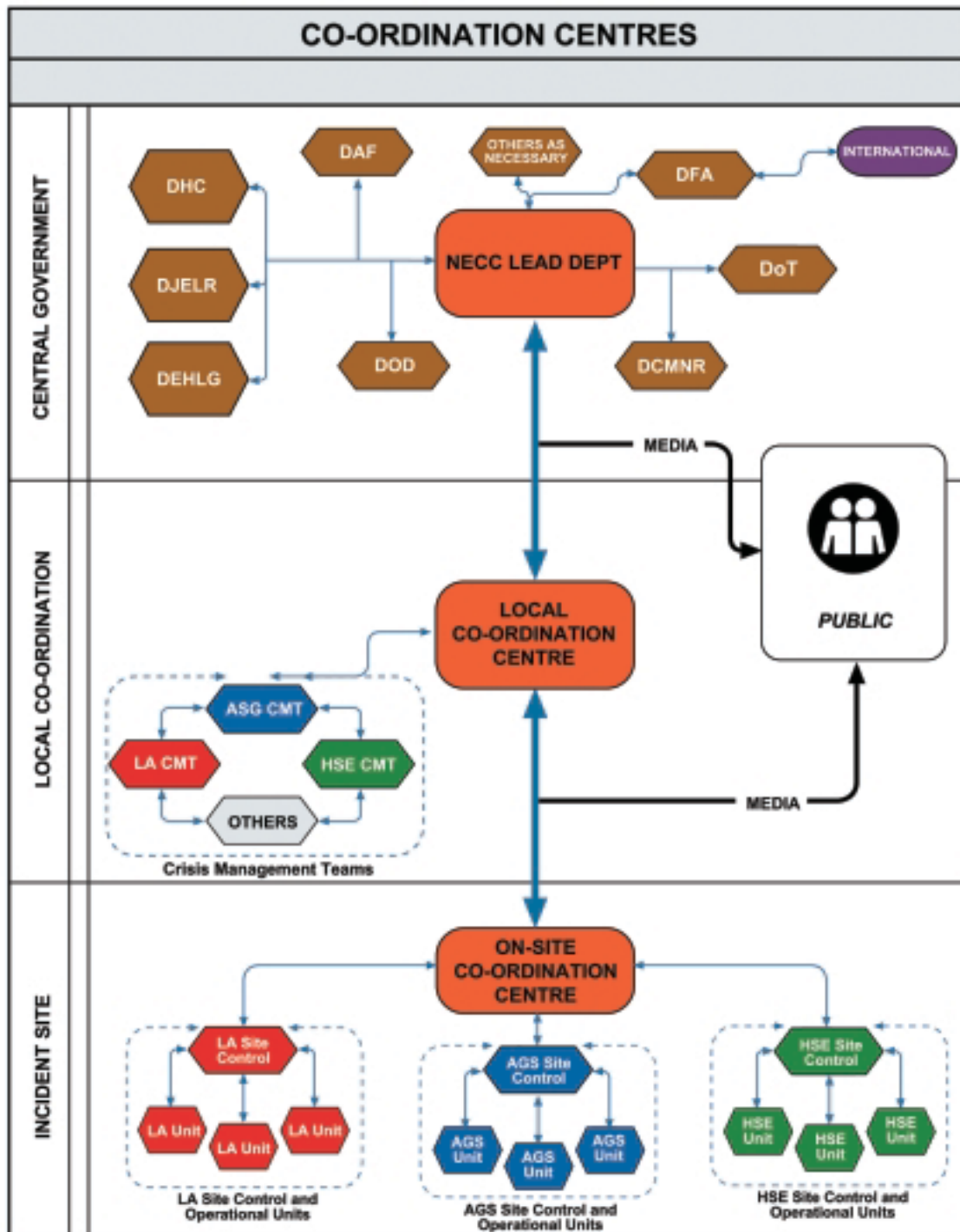
- The first is by pre-nomination. In Table 7.1 of Appendix F7, pre-nominated lead agencies for common incident types are presented, and this should be the primary basis for determining the lead agency.
- The second is a default arrangement, where the categorisations in the Table do not seem to apply and the lead agency is not obvious. In these situations, which should be rare, the Local Authority will be the “default” lead agency.

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<sup>18</sup> Department of Defence, *Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance*, (2004)



Figure 5.1  
Schematic Diagram Illustrating  
Command, Control and Co-ordination Levels and Information Flows



Note: For clarity not all information flows are shown on this diagram



The important outcome is that there is a rapid determination of the lead agency for the major emergency, which also defines which one of the three Controllers of Operations is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator. When this determination is made, the person assuming the role of On-Site Co-ordinator should note the time and that the determination was made in the presence of the two other controllers on site. This should then be communicated by the On-Site Co-ordinator to all parties involved in the response and the On-Site Co-ordinator should begin to undertake that role.



The Framework provides that the lead agency role may, in certain circumstances, change over time. The methods for doing this are also set out in Appendix F7.

#### **5.4.3 Exercising the Co-ordination Role**

The practice of co-ordination by the lead agency at a major emergency should grow from the “normal” range of emergencies. While co-ordination of multi-service response at normal emergencies is implicitly in place, the Framework makes ownership of the co-ordination role in the “normal” emergency range explicit. In this way, responsibility for an inter-agency co-ordination role at “normal” emergencies is clearly assigned. As a result, the skills and culture of co-ordination can be practised at hundreds of normal emergencies annually, rather than being introduced for the first time at infrequently declared major emergencies.

Being assigned the lead agency role means that a specific principal response agency is assigned responsibility for the co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions) and should lead all co-ordination activity associated with the emergency (on-site, off-site, etc.) and make every effort to achieve a high level of co-ordination using the arrangements of the Framework. The co-ordination function for any emergency includes:

- ensuring involvement of the three principal response agencies and the principal emergency services in sharing information on the nature of the emergency situation;
- ensuring involvement of the range of organisations (other than principal response agencies) who may be requested to respond in co-ordination activities and arrangements;
- ensuring that mandated co-ordination decisions (see Section 5.4.4) are made promptly and communicated to all involved;
- ensuring that site management issues are addressed and decided;
- ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated and implemented;

- 
- 
- ensuring that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating;
  - operating the generic information management systems;
  - ensuring that the ownership of the lead agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate;
  - ensuring that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down;
  - ensuring that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services which attended.

#### 5.4.4 Decision-Making Mandates

Mandates, in the context of a major emergency response, establish the envelopes of empowered activity and decision-making to be expected, without references to higher authority. Mandates exist at many levels, including site, local, regional and national. They are assigned to/associated with specific roles, e.g. On-Site Co-ordinator, Chair of Local Co-ordination Group, Chair of Regional Co-ordination Group, etc.

The purpose of these mandates is to make explicit the decisions that need to be made at the various levels, and to define how decisions are to be arrived at quickly. When a person in an empowered position makes a decision in accordance with these procedures, each principal response agency should implement those aspects which are within their remit. Appendix F8 provides further guidance on specific mandates associated with key roles.

Associated with this empowerment is the need for individuals holding key roles to hear the views of colleagues in other principal response agencies and to use the information management systems (see Section 5.4.6) as part of the decision-making process. These decision-making mandates do not empower unilateral decision-making until the views of the other agencies have been heard and considered.

An important feature of sound, standing mandates is that they can readily be adjusted to meet the needs of a particular set of major emergency circumstances, needs which are likely to be unexpected.

#### 5.4.5 Delivering the Co-ordination Role

In this section, the additional structures, arrangements and facilities, which are required to make co-ordination happen successfully, are set out. It is also necessary to make sure that this process is effective and streamlined, so that it fits in with current practice and structures and with the requirements of differing emergency situations. Crucial in this are:

- viewing co-ordination as a progressively expanding task, as the scale/complexity of the emergency increases;
- defining key roles in co-ordination;
- defining and setting the parameters/boundaries for the mandate/authority given with the co-ordination responsibility;
- identifying physical spaces to provide for and support co-ordination;
- appropriate communications facilities;
- co-ordination of media liaison; and
- information management systems.

#### 5.4.5.1 On-Site Co-ordination

The primary mechanism used to deliver co-ordination on site is the arrangement for an “On-Site Co-ordinator”, provided by the lead agency as discussed above. As soon as they meet, the three Controllers of Operations should determine which is the lead agency, as described in Section 5.4.2 above and Appendix F7, and thereby establish who is the On-Site Co-ordinator. The functions of the On-Site Co-ordinator are set out further in Section 5.4.3. The On-Site Co-ordinator will chair the “On-Site Co-ordinating Group”. In addition to the On-Site Co-ordinator, this group should comprise the controllers of operations of the other two agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate.

The On-Site Co-ordinator should determine which facilities should be used as the On-Site Co-ordination Centre. Depending on the circumstance, this may be a standard vehicle, designated for the task, a purpose-built vehicle, a tent or other temporary structure or an appropriate space/building adjacent to the site.

#### 5.4.5.2 Local Co-ordination Groups

The activation of the inter-agency “Local Co-ordination Group”, (the “Off-site Co-ordination Centre” in the 1984 Framework) is another key level of co-ordination. When a major emergency has been declared and the lead agency determined, the relevant officers of the lead agency should implement a Local Co-ordination Group mobilisation procedure<sup>19</sup>. The representative of the lead agency will chair the Local Co-ordination Group and will exercise the mandates associated with this position. The Local Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the other two principal response agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action

<sup>19</sup> A Local Co-ordination Group mobilisation procedure should be appended to every Major Emergency Plan. The procedure should provide for contact being made with the nominated members of the Local Co-ordination Group and confirming which Local Co-ordination Centre will be used for the emergency, the time at which the Group will convene and any other arrangements necessary to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group to perform its functions.



Management Officer (where considered appropriate), representatives of other agencies and specialists, as appropriate.

The Local Co-ordination Centre is a pre-nominated building, typically at county or sub-county level, that has the appropriate support arrangements in place to facilitate the effective working of the Local Co-ordination Group. Appendix F9 provides guidance on the development and operation of co-ordination centres/facilities.

In general, it is the function of the Local Co-ordination Group to provide strategic level management for the immediate, medium and long-term consequences of the incident. This strategic management function will include:

- establishing high level objectives for the situation, and giving strategic direction to the response;
- determining and disseminating the overall architecture of response co-ordination;
- anticipating issues arising;
- providing support for the on-site response;
- resolving issues arising from the site;
- ensuring the generic information management system is operated;
- taking over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information for the public as soon as it meets and using all available channels to make concise and accurate information available;
- deciding, and taking action to manage public perceptions of the risks involved, as well as managing the risks, during emergencies that threaten the public;
- co-ordinating and managing all matters relating to the media, other than on-site;
- establishing and maintaining links with the Regional Coordination Centre (if involved);
- establishing and maintaining links with the lead Government Department/ National Emergency Co-ordination Centre;
- ensuring co-ordination of the response activity, other than the on-site element;
- deciding on resource and financial provision; and
- taking whatever steps are necessary to start to plan for recovery.

#### 5.4.5.3 Crisis Management Teams

The Crisis Management Team is a strategic level management group within each principal response agency, which is assembled during a major emergency to:

- manage, control and co-ordinate the agency's overall response to the situation;
- provide support to the agency's Controller of Operations on site and mobilise resources from within the agency or externally as required;

- liaise with national head quarters, in the case of An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive, and relevant Government Departments on strategic issues; and
- ensure appropriate participation of the agency in the inter-agency co-ordination structures.

The members of the Crisis Management Team are usually the senior managers of the agency, who will meet at a pre-arranged location (usually in the agency's headquarters) designated for this use. The use of Crisis Management Teams within each of the principal response agencies facilitates the mobilisation of senior staff to deal with the crisis, in light of the evolving situation, rather than leaving multiple roles to a small number of individuals who hold key positions. In this way, the objectives of prioritising and managing a protracted crisis can be dealt with effectively, while keeping the day-to-day business running.

The Crisis Management Team provides support to the principal response agency's representative at the Local Co-ordination Group, supports their own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the agency's normal day-to-day services that the community requires.


#### 5.4.5.4 Regional Co-ordination Groups

In certain circumstances the Framework provides that the local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level. This may occur where the nature of an emergency is such that:

- the resources available in the local area where the incident happens do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or
- the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or
- the incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or
- the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the principal response agencies.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination (see Section 4.1.4). The key provision in ensuring co-ordination of the extended response is the activation of a "Regional Co-ordination Group". The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the principal response agencies involved from the extended "response region". The boundaries of the actual "region" for response purposes should be





determined by the lead agency, which has declared the regional level emergency, in light of the circumstances prevailing, or likely to develop. The regions for response purposes need not coincide necessarily with the pre-determined regions for preparedness.

The lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group.

Depending on the circumstances, the goal of regional co-ordination may be achieved by using:

- a single Regional Co-ordination Centre; or
- a Regional Co-ordination Centre supported by one or more Local Co-ordination Centres.

The method of operation of a Regional Co-ordination Centre will be similar to the Local Co-ordination Centre and further guidance may be found in Appendix F9.

Any one of the nominated Local Co-ordination Centres may be used as a Regional Co-ordination Centre, or a specific Regional Centre may be designated for this purpose. The choice of location will be determined in each situation by the Chair of the Local Co-ordinating Group declaring the regional level emergency and will depend on the location and nature of the emergency and any associated infrastructural damage. When a Regional Co-ordination Centre is activated, it too becomes a key information management system node, with links to each active Local Co-ordination Centre and onward to the Lead Government Department and/or National Emergency Co-ordination Centre, as appropriate.

#### **5.4.5.5 Linking with National Level Co-ordination**

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, each principal response agency should inform its parent Department of the declaration, as part of that agency's mobilisation procedure (see section 5.1). The three parent Departments, in their role as members of the National Steering Group, should consult and agree, on the basis of available information, which Government Department will be designated as lead Department, in keeping with the Department of Defence's Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance. Where the determination is that the lead Department is a Government Department other than one of the members of the National Steering Group, the chair of the National Steering Group (or a person acting on his/her behalf) should inform both the lead Department and the lead agency of the designation. Where there is difficulty in designating a lead Department in accordance with these arrangements, the Department of the Taoiseach should be contacted by the chair of the National Steering Group and that



Department will determine the matter.

When designated, the lead Government Department will be responsible for activating its own internal emergency/crisis management arrangements and making contact with the relevant Local Co-ordination Group (or Regional Co-ordination Group, if appropriate). The Local Co-ordination Centre should brief the lead Department on the situation using the generic information management system (see Section 5.4.6). Issues arising should be developed as necessary between the Local Co-ordination Group and the lead Government Department. Where appropriate, the Government Press Secretary, in conjunction with the press office of the lead Department, will co-ordinate communications with the public/media at national level.

The lead Department should provide information on the emergency to other Government Departments that may have a support role, as outlined in the Department of Defence's Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance. The lead Department should decide if Inter-Departmental co-ordination facilities are to be activated, typically an Inter-Departmental Emergency Response Co-ordination Group, which may meet at the National Emergency Co-ordination Centre, or other appropriate facility.

It is also the responsibility of the lead Department, in association with the Department of the Taoiseach, to give effect to the provisions of a Government Decision relating to arrangements for Cabinet and Cabinet Committees, where the response to certain emergencies warrants political direction.

The arrangements described above for linking the local response to a major emergency with national level co-ordination arise from what might be termed a "bottom up" situation. Where one of the National Emergency Plans discussed in Section 4.2. is activated, a "top-down" connection may be put in place, i.e. the Regional and Local Co-ordination Centres are requested to become operational by the lead Department. The configuration of Regional and Local Co-ordination Centres to be activated under this provision should be determined in light of the circumstances warranting the activation.

The relationships between different levels of Command, Control and Co-ordination, and the related Information Flows, are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

#### **5.4.6 Information Management Systems**

##### **5.4.6.1 Purpose of Information Management**

The purpose of information management in a major emergency is to facilitate decision-making. The quality of the information that is presented to decision-makers is crucial to effective decision-making, and is recognised as a key determinant of outcome. Decision-

makers in major emergency situations are likely to have to make critical decisions based upon incomplete information. Thus, great efforts should be made to generate information for decision-makers that is as timely, accurate and clear as possible.

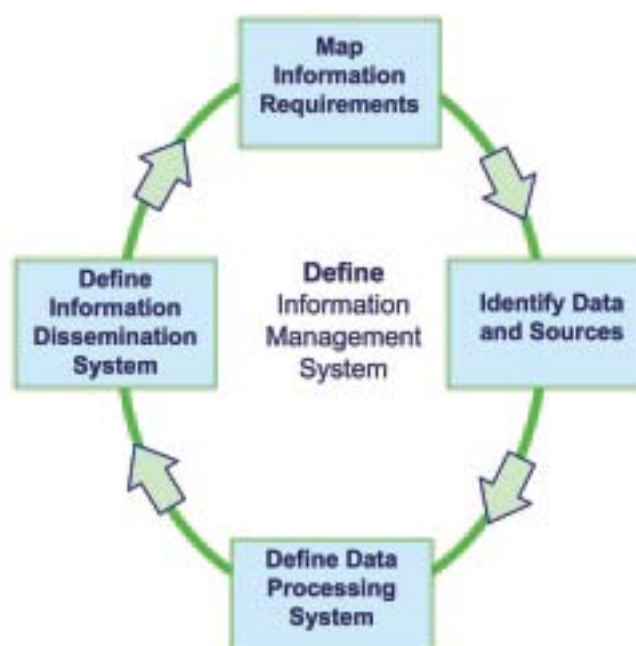
What decision-makers need is organised contextual presentation of what is happening, qualified by the major steps by which this situation has come about, and not a plethora of incoming raw data. Confronted with a deluge of unfiltered data, key managers and decision-makers in major emergencies often tend either to become themselves immersed in making sense of it, to the detriment of timely decision-making and delivery, or simply to focus upon obviously salient perspectives and operate reactively, based upon their personal experience.

#### 5.4.6.2 The Information Management Cycle

A typical information management cycle is illustrated in Figure 5.2 below. The On-Site Co-ordinator and the Chairs of the Local/Regional Co-ordination Groups should hold information sharing sessions at regular intervals with the other members of their co-ordination groups. It is important that all members of a co-ordinating group at any centre can jointly view the full array of available information. To enhance inter-agency communication, it is important that agencies adhere to the agreed common terminology in Appendix F3 and avoid the use of their own abbreviations.

**FIGURE 5.2**  
**Information Management Cycle**

#### 5.4.6.3 Information Management Officers



Given the importance attached to the information management function, the lead agency should have trained Information Management Officers at the scene and at co-ordination centres to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordinator and the chairs of the Local and Regional Co-ordination Groups. Information Management Officers should be experienced managers who have had practice prioritising and presenting large amounts of information. This is a stand-alone task for trained and relatively senior managers – not “board markers”. The role of the Information Management Officer is key to the success of the information management process.



#### 5.4.6.4 A Generic Information Management System

There should be a readily available facility to exchange information between different elements involved in the response. Therefore, a generic information management system is needed which is common and used by all co-ordination centres from on-site upwards, through local and regional and on to national co-ordination levels, where appropriate. The common generic information management system, which is applicable at all levels, is described in full in Appendix F10. The generic system reflects the regime of mandates, thus defining the responsibilities and authority/hierarchy of the matrix of co-ordination centres in terms of delivery and support.

**TABLE 5.1**  
**The Generic Information Management System**

Recognised Current Situation >	Key Issues >	Strategic Aim >	Actions
Recognised Current Situation*	Key Issues*	Strategic Aim/Priorities*	Actions*
The present situation, described clearly and succinctly, as a basis for co-ordination and decision-making. To include key events that inform understanding and interpretation of the recognised current situation.	The important issues arising and against which the overall response needs to be constantly assessed.	The overall aim (strategic direction) and the priority items that must be actioned in order to meet the aim.	Actions that have been decided in order to bring the situation under control.

A comprehensive record should be kept of these key presentations, together with the



rationale for key decisions and actions. While the lead agency will operate the generic information management system, each agency should have and operate its own record keeping systems.

#### **5.4.6.5 Developing the Action Plan**

There is a need to put universal information management systems in place to support key decision-makers. From an emergency management perspective this system is used to determine, and declare succinctly, the desired achievable outcome and the means by which this is to be delivered. From this, an auditable list of Actions (an Action Plan), to bring the situation under control, can be articulated and communicated, based on the best available information.

When decisions are made to take particular actions, the On-Site Co-ordinator, or chairs of the Local or Regional Co-ordination Groups, may wish to appoint an Action Management Officer, (see also Appendix F9) who ensures that decisions are communicated to the correct persons/agencies and who follows up and reports on the implementation of the action plan.

### **5.4.7 Communications**


#### **5.4.7.1 Public Information**

Apart from the normal public interest in news and information, which is generally provided by the media, there can be situations where it will be crucial for the principal response agencies to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation. This will be especially important where members of the public may perceive themselves and their families to be at risk and are seeking information on actions which they can take to protect themselves and their families.

The Local Co-ordination Group should take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency. The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated “help-lines”, web-pages, Aertel, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the media.

The lead agency may request the media to carry Public Information Notices during a major emergency to disseminate important messages, such as how individuals may help themselves and their neighbours in a particular situation.

It may be necessary for the Local Co-ordination Group to put significant efforts into



managing public perceptions of the risks involved, as well as managing the actual risks, during emergencies, which threaten the public (see Section 5.9.2.).

#### 5.4.7.2 The Media

The media will respond quickly to a large-scale incident and this media presence may extend into days or weeks. It is the responsibility of the lead agency to establish a Media Centre at or near the site of the emergency for use by the principal response agencies in dealing with the media at the site. Each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the site and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers on site should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. All statements to the media should be cleared with the On-Site Co-ordinator or his/her Media Liaison Officer .

The Local Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site, during a major emergency. As with arrangements at the site, each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local Co-ordination Centre and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

Working to facilitate the needs of the media will help reduce the possibility of attempts at unauthorised access to the site of the emergency or other sites associated with it. Regular media briefings should be scheduled to suit television and radio broadcasts. These briefings should also be used to promulgate help-line telephone numbers and necessary public information messages. Background information that has been compiled before the event can be used to inform holding statements for use during the early stages of the incident.

In many situations media attention will move quickly away from the site to other locations, including the Local Co-ordination Centre, hospitals where casualties are being treated and mortuaries and, therefore, arrangements for the media at or adjacent to these locations will need to be provided.

#### 5.4.7.3 Communications Systems (Technical)

Each element of the principal response agency (including its emergency services) relies on technical communication facilities to enable it to function and for different units to communicate, both at the site and between the site and its command, control or communications centre. These systems generally use private mobile radio (VHF) for communication between vehicles and communication centres and hand-portable radio (UHF) for communication on site, or combination systems in some cases. Services have



communication protocols and procedures for the use of these systems.

Communication systems serve command structures within services and it is neither necessary nor desirable that there is inter-agency radio communication at all levels. However, it is critical that robust arrangements for inter-agency communication on site(s) is provided for at Controller of Operations level as a minimum. For this purpose, the fire service will bring a set of hand-portable radios, dedicated specifically to inter-agency communication, to the site. It is also crucial that there are appropriate communication links between different elements of the site management, as described in Section 5.5 and Appendix F11.

Facilities are also required to provide resilient communications between sites and Local Co-ordination Centres. Individual services will also need to be able to communicate with their own crisis management centres. This may be achieved via their normal service command, control or communication centres.

Consideration should be given to harnessing the capability of the Amateur Radio Emergency Network to quickly erect/configure communications networks, in the event of loss of normal communications systems.

## **5.5 Site Management**


### **5.5.1 Developing a Site Management Plan**

The highest-ranking officer of the first attendance team from each of the principal emergency services will, de facto, have the role of Controller of Operations of that agency at the scene until relieved in accordance with that organisation's protocols (see Section 5.3.2). The immediate concerns and actions of this officer, in addition to his/her normal command role and making a plan to deploy the available resources to best effect, should include:

- continuing to gather information on the nature and extent of the incident;
- determining the lead agency in association with the other controllers (see Section 5.4.2);
- nominating the On-Site Co-ordinator (see Section 5.4.5.1) and activating this co-ordination role;
- sending information messages to his/her own service's command, control or communications centre;
- establishing inter-agency communication links and links to the Local Co-ordination Centre; and
- making contact with other services arriving at the scene.

The initial important task of the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other two





Controllers, is the development of a Site Management Plan. This should be in accordance with the typical Site Management Arrangements set out in Figure 5.3 below and Appendix F11, leading to the establishment of all or some of the following, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordons, and Access Control Points;
- a Danger Area, if appropriate;
- Site Access Routes;
- Principal Response Agency Control Points and Site Control Point;
- On-Site Co-ordination Centre;
- Rendezvous Point;
- Holding Areas for the different services;
- Casualty Clearing Station;
- Ambulance Loading Area;
- Survivor Reception Centre;
- Media Centre; and
- Friends and Relatives Reception Area.

The first response vehicle from each of the principal emergency services that arrive at the scene will become the Control Point of that service until the Controller of Operations declares otherwise; dedicated incident command/control vehicles will take over the control function when they arrive. The Controllers of Operations should ensure that all communications from the scene to individual service command, control or communication centres and to the Local Co-ordination Centre are routed through these vehicles.

The On-Site Co-ordination Group should arrange that, where possible, the Control Points of the three principal emergency services should be co-located to form the initial Site Control Point. The On-Site Co-ordination Group should establish the Site Control Point as early as practicable.

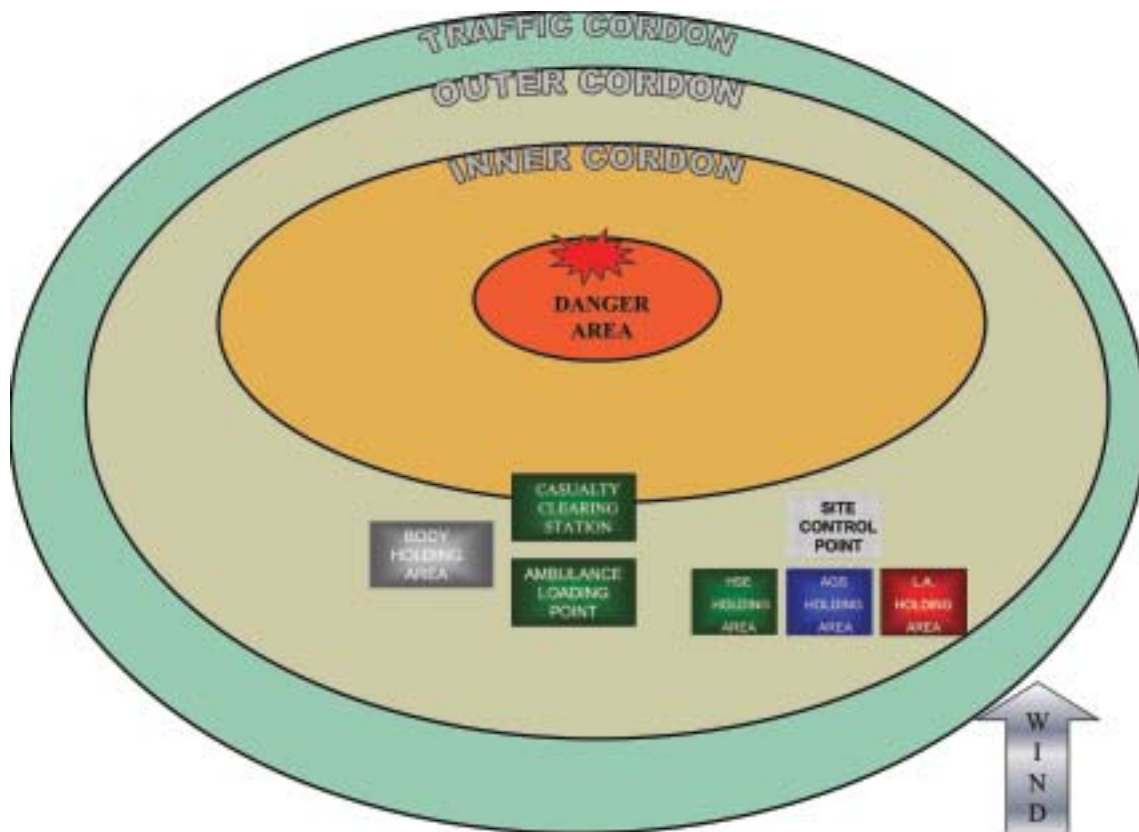
More detailed site management arrangements for Hazardous Materials incidents are provided in Section 5.8 and Figure 5.4

### **5.5.2 Identification of Personnel**

Personnel from the principal emergency services are readily identifiable to each other in their distinctive uniforms. However, many who would not normally attend the scenes of emergencies may be required to do so on foot of a declaration of a major emergency. It is important that the service and role of all individuals responding are readily identifiable.



**FIGURE 5.3**  
**Typical Site Management Arrangement**




All personnel responding to an emergency should wear the clothing set out in Appendix F12 for identification purposes. They should also carry the form of identification which is issued to them from time to time, and should ensure that their vehicles are adequately identified. Where identification is not permanently retained on the person or vehicle, it should be obtained from that agency's officer at the relevant Holding Area.

In order that they are clearly identifiable on site, the three Controllers should don tabards as outlined in Appendix F12, with one of them donning the tabard of On-Site Co-ordinator, as soon as the lead agency is determined.

### 5.5.3 Review of Initial Approach to Scene Management

The initial steps taken to manage the emergency and the scene should be reviewed when each principal response agency's designated Controller of Operations has arrived at the On-Site Co-ordination Centre. When the On-Site Co-ordinator has assumed that function,





s/he should ensure, with the other Controllers of Operations, that the incident management systems are functioning. These systems should build on everyday command practices and procedures within the responding agencies. The initial decisions on scene management should be reviewed at regular intervals, including:

- the layout of the site approximating to the typical Site Management Plan in Figure 5.3 and Appendix F11 of the Framework. Where, for operational reasons, this layout cannot be achieved, the principles of an Inner Cordon, where rescue activities are undertaken, a safer area outside that cordon, where survivors are assembled and casualties treated, and an Outer Cordon, that restricts/controls access, should be applied as far as is reasonably practicable;
- traffic management by An Garda Síochána, which is necessary to ensure that access routes to the site are kept clear as far as is reasonably practicable, given the circumstances and location of the incident;
- that inter-service communication systems have been established and that communications from the On-Site Co-ordination Centre to the Local Co-ordination Centre have been established and are functioning. Each Controller should ensure that secure communication has been established between his/her control point and the principal response agency's Crisis Management Team at headquarters;
- that structured information management arrangements have been established in accordance with Section 5.4.6. In addition to providing a consistent basis for on-site decision-making, information needs to be transmitted to the Local Co-ordination Centre. This data also needs to be captured for record purposes at regular intervals;
- whether or not a new Action Plan is required to bring the situation under control.

#### 5.5.4 Danger Area

A Danger Area may be declared (see also Appendix F11) where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations. This could arise because of dangers posed by the release of hazardous materials, buildings in danger of further collapse, the threat of explosion or the presence of an armed individual. Any officer/responder who is aware of such additional risks should bring them to the attention of the On-Site Co-ordinator via his/her Controller of Operations. The On-site Co-ordination Group may, in light of the available information, decide to declare a Danger Area and may designate an officer, appropriate for the circumstances, e.g. the Senior Fire Officer at the site in a case involving hazardous materials, to define the boundaries of, and to control access to, the Danger Area.

When the Defence Forces deploy an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team in Aid to the Civil Power, the Officer in Charge of the team, upon arrival at the scene, will assume



responsibility for the EOD task and will inform the On-Site Co-ordinator of the boundaries of the Danger Area, and advise on Cordon(s).

Where it is necessary that services continue to operate in a Danger Area, they should apply their normal incident and safety management arrangements, and relevant officers will continue to exercise command over their own personnel working in a Danger Area.

Where a situation deteriorates to a point where the officer in charge of the Danger Area decides that it is necessary to withdraw response personnel from a Danger Area, a signal, comprising repeated sounding of a siren for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given. All personnel should withdraw on hearing this signal.

#### **5.5.5 Aerial Support and Helicopters**


Aerial support, primarily in the form of helicopters, may be beneficial or required to assist the operations of the principal response agencies at the site of a major emergency. Helicopters may be used to provide aerial reconnaissance of the site, to ferry people or equipment to an otherwise inaccessible site, to remove casualties from inaccessible locations or to transport them to distant facilities. There are four likely sources of helicopter assistance:

- the helicopters of An Garda Síochána may be used for aerial surveillance;
- Irish Coast Guard helicopters may provide heavy lift capability;
- Defence Forces helicopters may be requested through previously agreed Memorandums of Understanding and Service Level Agreements; and
- the private sector.

The use of helicopters has to be integrated into the overall site management arrangements to avoid having a negative impact on operations on the ground. The On-Site Co-ordinator will, in consultation with the other Controllers of Operations, determine if, and for what purpose, helicopter support should be mobilised to the site. All requests for helicopter assistance will be made through An Garda Síochána. Where it is necessary for a helicopter or helicopters to land near a site, the On-Site Co-ordinator will, in consultation with the other Controllers of Operations determine the preferred Landing Zone(s) and communicate this as part of the mobilisation request. No helicopters should travel to the site of a major emergency unless mobilised through this arrangement.

#### **5.5.6 Air Exclusion Zones**

Where the principal response agencies consider it appropriate and beneficial, the On-Site Co-ordinator may request, through An Garda Síochána, that an Air Exclusion Zone be declared around the emergency site by the Irish Aviation Authority. When a restricted



zone above and around the site is declared, it is promulgated by means of a “Notice to Airmen” - NOTAM - from the Irish Aviation Authority.

## **5.6 Mobilising Additional Resources**

### **5.6.1 Introduction**

At its most basic, the declaration of a major emergency will involve the activation of the Major Emergency Plans of the relevant Garda Division, Health Service Executive area and Local Authority. While the principal response agencies may provide an appropriate response to the emergency and its consequences, it may be necessary to draw support from other authorities by:

- activating mutual aid from neighbouring principal response agencies;
- activating support through declaring a regional level emergency;
- mobilising assistance from other organisations; and
- seeking national/international assistance.

The On-Site Co-ordinator should exercise an over-viewing role of all arrangements to mobilise additional resources to the site of the major emergency and track the status of mobilisation requests and the deployment of additional resources.

### **5.6.2 Mutual Aid**



Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual principal response agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring principal response agencies. As they are national organisations, the Crisis Management Teams of the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána should arrange to provide the additional support required; Local Authorities will support each other on a mutual aid basis.

### **5.6.3 Regional Level Emergencies**

In certain situations a regional level emergency may be declared and the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination activated, as set out in Section 5.4.5.4. This activation may be used to access resources available within a region to provide regional level assistance.

### **5.6.4 Assistance from other Organisations/Agencies**

There are a number of organisations and agencies which may be called on to assist the principal response agencies in responding to major emergencies in addition to specialist national and local organisations, such as the RPII, the EPA, the HSA and local port and airport authorities. Further information on these organisations and arrangements to mobilise them is provided in Appendix F13. These arrangements should be agreed with



each agency (or confirmed in the case of pre-agreement) and set out in each principal response agency's Major Emergency Plan. Some of the organisations are listed below:

#### **5.6.4.1 The Defence Forces (Permanent Defence Forces consisting of the Army, Air Corps, Navy and Reserve Defence Forces)**

The Defence Forces can provide a significant support role in a major emergency response. The Defence Forces capabilities can be employed across a wide spectrum of activity in a major emergency. However, these capabilities are primarily deployed in a military role at home and in peace support operations overseas and their deployment in a major emergency situation may require a lead in time to facilitate redeployment. Provision of Defence Forces capabilities is dependent on the exigencies of other demands and on prior agreed arrangements through Memorandums of Understanding and Service Level Agreements between the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces and relevant Government Departments. In addition, the Defence Forces have a key role in responding to all emergency incidents involving improvised explosive devices, when they are called upon by An Garda Síochána, by the provision of Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) teams, in an Aid to the Civil Power role.

#### **5.6.4.2 Civil Defence**


The Civil Defence service is a statutory organisation of volunteers, which can provide a very important resource for use in major emergencies in support of the principal response agencies. Civil Defence services, which include over 3,000 active volunteers, are structured on a county basis and are operated by the Local Authorities. A Civil Defence Board, with a national Civil Defence Headquarters, oversees and assists the development of the Local Authority based Civil Defence organisation.

As the Civil Defence service is a Local Authority service, Section 3 of the Local Authority Major Emergency Plan should include details of Civil Defence resources and the protocol for mobilising Civil Defence should be included as part of the Local Authority Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedures.

#### **5.6.4.3 The Irish Red Cross**

The Irish Red Cross is established and regulated under the Red Cross Acts, 1938-54. These statutes define a role for the Irish Red Cross as an auxiliary to the state authorities in time of emergency and also provide a specific mandate to assist the medical services of the Irish Defence Forces in time of armed conflict. The President of Ireland is President of the Irish Red Cross and the Chairman is appointed by the President, on the advice of the Government. The Department of Defence is the government department associated with the organisation – a senior official of that department sits on the Board of the Irish Red Cross.





Irish Red Cross's membership comprises 2,500 volunteers, supported by staff in Head Office in Dublin and three regional offices. Volunteers are organised in local units, with overarching county and regional structures. The membership is country wide, with 111 units in twenty-five of the twenty-six counties in the state. The main relationship with the principal response agencies in major emergency response is as an auxiliary resource to the ambulance services. Subsidiary search and rescue and in-shore rescue units of the Irish Red Cross support An Garda Síochána and the Irish Coast Guard.

#### **5.6.4.4 Voluntary Emergency Services Sector**

The voluntary emergency services sector provides a significant potential resource to assist the principal response agencies in major emergency response. They may provide a pool of persons with relevant skills, vehicles and useful equipment and facilities.

The normal range of voluntary emergency services includes the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, St John's Ambulance Service, Mountain Rescue Teams, Cave Rescue Teams, Search and Rescue Dog Associations, River Rescue Units, Community Inshore Rescue Units, RNLI, Sub-Aqua Units, etc. Their ongoing service to the public includes attendance at public events, as well as searches for missing persons and rescue of persons in distress.



#### **5.6.4.5 Utilities,**

Utilities are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the principal response agencies in making situations safe. They may also be directly involved in restoring their own services, for example, electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm. It is important that there is close co-ordination between the principal response agencies and utilities involved in/affected by an emergency. Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to an emergency, they need to liaise with the On-Site Co-ordinator. It is also recommended that representatives of individual utilities on site should be invited to provide a representative for the On-Site Co-ordination Group. It is recommended that individual utilities be invited to attend and participate in relevant work of Local Co-ordination Groups.

#### **5.6.4.6 The Private Sector**

Private sector organisations may be involved in a major emergency situation in two ways. They may be involved through, for example, ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc. They may also be called on to assist in the response to a major emergency by providing specialist services and equipment, which would not normally be held or available within the principal response agencies.





Where a major emergency involves such third parties, the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, should determine the extent to which it would be beneficial to their operations to have contact with these parties and how this contact can best be facilitated. This could include representation at the On-Site Co-ordination Group, or the Local Co-ordination Group in some circumstances.

It is a function of the Controller of Operations of each agency to determine if any private sector services should be mobilised to assist with, or to perform, functions, both at the site and at other locations associated with the emergency. The process of mobilising such private sector assistance should be undertaken by each principal response agency in accordance with its own procedures.

#### 5.6.4.7 Integrating “Casual Volunteers” into the Response


In many emergency situations, the public respond to assist friends, neighbours and even complete strangers when disaster strikes. The first passers-by at road traffic accidents usually stop and, having called the emergency services, try to assist in whatever way they can. In emergency situations, such as flooding, land-slides, bog and forest fires, a sense of solidarity and community prompts people to become involved. On another level, people regularly volunteer to search for missing persons.

Individuals acting in this way are termed “casual volunteers” in major emergency management and they can provide a valuable resource to the principal response agencies, as well as to casualties and those needing assistance. It is recognised that communities that are empowered to be part of the response to a disaster, rather than allowing themselves to be simply victims of it, are more likely to recover and to restore normality quickly, with fewer long-term consequences.

The activities of the “casual volunteer” may fall into two categories:

- those which are instinctive and unplanned in the immediate aftermath of an emergency occurring; and
- those which are part of a planned responses to a situation (such as a search for missing persons).

In the first case, the involvement of casual volunteers could give rise to conflict with the designation of cordons as part of site management arrangements. It is important that at an early stage the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, should determine if ongoing assistance is required from casual volunteers, so that An Garda Síochána’s cordoning arrangements can take account of this.



Where the On-Site Co-ordinator determines that casual volunteers should be integrated into the response, it is recommended that the service tasking them, or confirming them in tasks on which they are engaged, should request volunteers to form teams of three, four or five persons, depending on the tasks, with one of their number as team leader. Where available, armbands (see Appendix F12) should be issued to casual volunteers to facilitate the site management arrangements.

In situations where casual volunteers are to be included as part of the planned response to a situation, it is generally recommended that they be offered a temporary volunteer status with the Civil Defence service for the duration of their involvement.

#### **5.6.5 Extra-Region/National/International Assistance**

The scale, complexity or likely duration of some emergencies may be such that significant assistance is required from neighbouring or other regions of the country, or from outside the state.

The decision to seek assistance from outside the region should be made by the lead agency, in association with the other principal response agencies, at the Local/Regional Co-ordination Centre. The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. It should also seek to identify the possible options for sourcing such assistance, be that from neighbouring regions, elsewhere in the state, from Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

Regional Co-ordination Groups needing assistance from neighbouring regions, including border regions needing assistance from Northern Ireland, should make the request directly (on a mutual aid basis).

A Regional Co-ordination Group may also request assistance from Government. National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. Requests for assistance should be developed at local or regional co-ordination level and directed by the lead agency to the lead Government Department.

The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of major emergencies. Requests for such assistance should be made by the chair of the Local or Regional Co-ordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.



### 5.6.6 Northern Ireland

There is a long-standing tradition of mutual assistance between the emergency services in Northern Ireland and the border counties. The April 2002 agreement between the British and Irish Governments provides for a range of co-operative measures between An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.


Existing arrangements between individual emergency services in both jurisdictions should continue to operate as they do at present. During an emergency, agencies should inform the Local/Regional Co-ordination Centre of any unilateral activation of arrangements with services in Northern Ireland.

Where a Local/Regional Co-ordination Group determines that additional assistance, above that arranged by the individual services, should be sought or that information on a situation should be made available to authorities in Northern Ireland, the request/information should be transmitted by An Garda Síochána to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, in accordance with internal code procedures of An Garda Síochána. Where appropriate, representatives of the equivalent of the principal response agencies in Northern Ireland should be invited to participate in Local/Regional Co-ordination Groups.

### 5.6.7 Integrating and Managing Support and Assistance

The On-Site Co-ordinator has the task of co-ordinating all external support and assistance into the overall response action plan. The Controller of Operations of the service which requested mobilisation of the external resource has responsibility for managing and integrating the contribution of these resources to the tasks identified in the response. The successful integration of external assistance depends on a number of factors including:

- a clear determination by the relevant Controller of Operations of the scope and scale of the tasks to be assigned to the responding organisation (in short, the formulation of a mandate);
- explicit arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of progress on assigned tasks;
- the nomination by the responding organisation of a liaison officer to either (or both as appropriate) the support team of the relevant Controller of Operations or the On-Site Co-ordination Group. The liaison officers should maintain the closest possible contact between their own organisation and the relevant team or group and be changed or rotated only to the minimum extent necessary;
- the ability of each liaison officer to assess and report the capabilities of the external agency to deliver the tasks assigned to that organisation; and
- the quality of mechanisms for communications between the external agency and the lead agency or the principal response agency which mobilised it.



Generally, all responding agencies should be made aware of the site management arrangements and should report as directed to the relevant Holding Area. Attempts should be made to assign external assistance units to tasks in a way that does not involve pooling or sharing equipment. Special attention may be required for both the welfare and safety needs of external agencies. External agencies should be made aware of and should comply with the principal response agencies' arrangements for liaising with the media.

## **5.7 Casualties and Survivors**

The primary objective of any response to a major emergency is to provide effective arrangements for the rescue, care, treatment and rehabilitation of all of the individuals who are affected by the emergency. These individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows: Casualties, including persons who are killed or injured, and Survivors. Survivors, for the purpose of the Framework, include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will need to make an early assessment of the casualty situation and identify if there are particular aspects which may impact on casualty management, such as, significant numbers of disabled, sick or immobile persons involved, and take action accordingly (see section 5.7.6).



As well as making provision for casualties and survivors, the principal response agencies should also make arrangements for the reception, facilitation and support of the friends and relatives of some or all of these individuals (see section 5.7.5).

### **5.7.1 The Injured**

At the site of a major emergency, the priorities of the principal response services are to save life, prevent further injury, rescue those who are trapped or in danger, triage casualties, provide them with appropriate treatment and transport them to the appropriate hospital(s) where necessary.

Once injured casualties have been rescued or found, they should be assessed or triaged as quickly as possible. Casualties are often found some distance from the primary site and search teams, co-ordinated by An Garda Síochána, should be established where it is considered that this may be necessary.

Triage is a dynamic process of assessing casualties and deciding the priority of their treatment, using a two-stage process of triage sieve and triage sort. Following initial triage, casualties will normally be labelled, using Triage Cards, and moved to a Casualty Clearing Station. The purpose of this labelling is to indicate the triage category of the



casualty, to facilitate the changing of that category, if required, and to record any treatment, procedure or medication administered. A standard card with Red (Immediate), Yellow (Urgent), Green (Delayed) and White (Dead) sections is normally used for this purpose.


The Casualty Clearing Station is established at the site by the Ambulance Service, in consultation with the Health Service Executive Controller and the Site Medical Officer. Here, casualties are collected, further triaged, treated, as necessary, and prepared for transport to hospital. The Health Service Executive Controller will, in consultation with the Site Medical Officer and the designated receiving hospitals, decide on the hospital destination of casualties.

Receiving hospitals, which have been activated as part of the major emergency response, will activate their Plan for Major Emergencies and prepare to receive casualties. Hospital plans are sub-plans of the HSE area plan. Hospital plans for major emergencies should include procedures for the activation of the plan, the despatch of a Site Medical Officer and Site Medical Team (if appropriate), activation of the hospital Emergency Control Room/Team, calling in of extra staff, the decanting of existing patients, the receipt and triage of casualties, casualty documentation, casualty flow and treatment across different clinical departments, the provision of information on casualties to An Garda Síochána, counselling, support and pastoral services for affected individuals, activation of Friends' and Relatives' support services, special mortuary arrangements and dealing with the media, as well as activation procedures and role descriptions for all ancillary departments and services which may have a part to play including Bed Management, Catering, Sterile Supplies, Chaplaincy, Security, Technical Services, Administration, etc.

These plans should also include procedures to facilitate and enhance cooperation and co-ordination with all other health services involved in the response, including the local Health Service Executive Crisis Management Team. The hospital Plan for Major Emergencies should be supported by individual departmental procedures as well as Action Cards for persons with key roles.

It should be noted that while some casualties will be transported to the Receiving Hospital(s) by the Ambulance Service, some casualties may leave the site by other means and may arrive at the designated Receiving Hospital(s), or other hospitals, in cars, buses, etc.

Other branches of the health services, such as Support Hospitals and Mental Health Services, which have been activated as part of the major emergency response, will also activate their plans or procedures for major emergencies as appropriate.



Once the emergency phase of the response is over and the site has been cleared of casualties, the main focus of the response, as well as media attention will normally move to the hospitals where casualties are being treated. The process of treatment, recovery and rehabilitation can be long and arduous, involving intensive physical treatment, with diagnostics, operations, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, complemented by psychiatric/psychological and social support, where required, which can continue for months or even years for some of those affected.

### 5.7.2 Fatalities

The bodies of casualties, which have been triaged as dead, should not be moved from the incident site unless this is necessary to effect the rescue of other casualties. The only other circumstance where bodies should be moved, before the Garda evidence collection process is complete, is if they are likely to be lost or damaged due to their location or the nature of the incident.

Bodies to be moved should be photographed first and their original position clearly marked and recorded. The recovery of the dead and human remains is part of an evidence recovery process and, as such, is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána acting as agents of the Coroner. The Local Authority may assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

When a doctor has pronounced an individual dead, arrangements in respect of the body are the responsibility of the local Coroner's Office, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána. Full information on procedures for dealing with fatalities is set out in Appendix F14, including the Coroner's role.

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will decide if it is necessary to establish a Body Holding Area at the site. The Body Holding Area, if established, should be situated close to the Casualty Clearing Station. Members of An Garda Síochána will staff this area and they will maintain the necessary logs to ensure the continuity of evidence.

It should be noted that the Body Holding Area is not the appropriate place for the prolonged storage of the dead and appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure minimal delay in moving bodies to a mortuary (temporary or otherwise).

Where circumstances require it, a Temporary Mortuary may be established. This decision should be made by the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the Coroner.



### 5.7.3 Survivors

In many emergency situations, survivors who are uninjured will become involved in the rescue and care of other victims. As such, they can be regarded as casual volunteers (see Section 5.6.4.7) and may often assist the first responders at the site.

Where considered appropriate, a Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. The On-Site Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the other Controllers, should determine if such a centre is to be established, and its location in the site management plan. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to establish and run this centre. All those who have survived the incident uninjured can be directed to this location where their details will be documented and collated by An Garda Síochána. Provision should be made at this centre for the immediate physical and psycho-social needs of survivors (e.g. hot drinks, food, blankets, telephones, first aid for minor injuries, etc.). It may be appropriate for the voluntary ambulance services to provide a variety of services at the Survivor Reception Centre. The Survivor Reception Centre should be secure from any unauthorised access and provide the maximum possible privacy for survivors.

Transport from the Survivor Reception Centre to home/meet relatives/safe place should be arranged as soon as it is practicable.

### 5.7.4 Casualty Bureau


In the event of a major emergency involving significant numbers of casualties, An Garda Síochána will establish a Casualty Bureau to collect and collate the details (including condition and location) of all casualties and survivors. To facilitate this process, a liaison/casualty officer will normally be sent by An Garda Síochána to each hospital where casualties are being treated. All other services should ensure that any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau.

The Casualty Bureau is the central contact point for the matching of information available on casualties with requests from all those seeking or providing information about persons involved in the incident. The media will be asked to promulgate the contact numbers for the Bureau so that the public can make enquiries and provide information.

### 5.7.5 Friends' and Relatives' Reception Centres

Some incidents may warrant the establishment of Friends' and Relatives' Reception Centres at appropriate locations associated with the emergency, in addition to those provided at the hospitals where the injured are being treated. The Local Co-ordination Group should determine the need for and arrange for the designation and operation/staffing of such centres. The purpose of a reception centre is to provide a





comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information. A building used as a Friends' and Relatives' Reception Centre should be secure from media intrusion and contain sufficient room to afford privacy to families receiving information about relatives. There will also be a need for a reliable process to establish the credentials of friends and relatives.

#### **5.7.6 Vulnerable Persons**

The principal response agencies and their associated emergency services should be particularly aware of the needs of those individuals who, because of dependency or disability, are particularly vulnerable during emergencies. Vulnerable persons can include children in schools, nurseries and child care centres as well as persons whose movement is inhibited either by reason of age, illness (including mental illness), or disability or who are deaf, blind, visually impaired or hearing impaired. Particular attention is required when an emergency involves or threatens a community hospital, residential home or day centre, where such individuals reside or are present for part of the day.



#### **5.7.7 Non-National Casualties**

It is possible that some incidents may involve significant numbers of casualties from other jurisdictions. In such circumstances the Local Co-ordination Centre should notify the relevant embassy if the nationality of the victims is known. The Department of Justice should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers. The Department of Foreign Affairs (which operates an out of hours Duty Officer system) should also be approached for appropriate assistance and liaison purposes.

#### **5.7.8 Pastoral and Psycho-Social Care**

The On-Site Co-ordinator needs to ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the principal response agencies in their work with casualties and survivors. Similarly, individual services should make arrangements for necessary pastoral services at any other locations associated with the emergency, such as hospitals.

It is generally recognised that being involved in abnormal, traumatic events, such as occur at major emergencies, can cause serious but normal stress reactions for the individuals involved. Those affected can include those who are injured, those who are involved with the event but not physically injured, persons who witness aspects of the emergency, individuals involved in rescue and recovery, including volunteers, as well as many other individuals involved in the response, such as those working with bodies, with severely



injured casualties and with bereaved families. It is accepted that the provision of practical help and information as well as social, emotional and psychological support, frequently referred to as psycho-social<sup>20</sup> support, to such individuals is an important objective of any emergency response.

It is the responsibility of each principal response agency to ensure that it has an appropriate structured programme in place to monitor and provide psycho-social support, as appropriate, to all members of staff who are involved in the emergency.

The health services have primary responsibility for the provision of psycho-social support to members of the public who may be affected by an emergency. The On-Site Co-ordinator should engage with the Health Service Executive Controller so as to establish the likely nature, dimensions, priorities and optimum location for the delivery of any psycho-social support that may be required. Similarly, the issue of psycho-social support at locations away from the site should be considered by the Local Co-ordination Group, and arrangements for this should be put in place by the Health Service Executive.

## **5.8 Managing Hazardous Materials Incidents**

### **5.8.1 Normal Hazardous Materials Incidents**

The management of hazardous materials incidents poses specific issues for the principal emergency services. Hazardous materials incidents can occur as a result of deliberate or accidental events, including explosions; or release incidents at industrial installations; or during the transportation of hazardous materials; or fires involving biological or radioactive sources. The Framework provides that the Local Authority is the lead agency for response to normal hazardous materials incidents, with the exception of those involving biological agents. The arrangements set out in the Framework should guide the response to hazardous materials incidents, even where a major emergency is not declared.


### **5.8.2 CCBRN Incidents**

As noted in Section 1.4, in the wake of a series of international terrorist attacks, there has been growing public concern about the threat of terrorist-related incidents, involving what are referred to collectively as CCBRN<sup>21</sup> incidents. As the principal response agencies will lead the response to these events also, the provisions of the Framework will govern the response to any such incident. The co-ordination and control arrangements set out in

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<sup>20</sup> Psycho-social care is the term used in a recent EU initiative, led by the Ministry for Health in Belgium, for the provision of a range of supports/interventions for persons involved in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

<sup>21</sup> CCBRN meaning terrorist incidents involving C - conventional explosives; C - chemical substances; B - biological agents; R - radiological and N - nuclear material



the Framework will apply to all hazardous materials incidents, regardless of the origin of the event.

The primary difference, from the response perspective, is that in cases where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency. Other issues relating to managing the response to CCBRN incidents are set out in two protocols for dealing with suspected chemical<sup>22</sup> and biological agents<sup>23</sup>. These protocols deal with a range of matters relevant to managing such incidents, including the identification of the materials involved. They also provide for involvement of the National Poisons Information Centre<sup>24</sup> and the National Virus Reference Laboratory<sup>25</sup>.

The Defence Forces, when requested, will assist An Garda Síochána in an Aid to the Civil Power role with Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams, where it is deemed appropriate, in accordance with current practice. Additional Defence Forces support in an Aid to the Civil Power role may be sought if required, including Naval and Air Corps assets. Defence Forces support may be sought, where appropriate, in accordance with the arrangements set out in Appendix F13.

Where a major emergency is declared, the provisions of the Framework will supercede all other arrangements in the protocols referred to above or other procedures.

### 5.8.3 Decontamination

Additional issues in relation to decontamination of the public may arise at some hazardous materials incidents. Decontamination in this context refers to a range of procedures employed to remove hazardous materials from people and equipment. It includes terms such as:

- **clinical decontamination**, meaning medical treatment by health professionals of patients affected by or contaminated with hazardous materials;
- **emergency decontamination**, when time does not allow for the deployment of specialist resources and it is judged imperative that decontamination of people is carried out as soon as possible;
- **personnel decontamination** meaning the decontamination of uninjured exposed persons;

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<sup>22</sup> Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government protocol for dealing with incidents involving actual or suspected chemical agents of devices in Ireland, Dublin, (November, 2001)

<sup>23</sup> Department of Health and Children, Biological threats - A Health Response for Ireland, Dublin, (May 2002).

<sup>24</sup> The National Poisons information Centre is located in Beaumont Hospital, Dublin.

The main function of the Centre is to provide information on the diagnosis and management of acute poisoning. The service is primarily aimed at members of the medical profession and a limited service is provided to the public.

<sup>25</sup> The National Virus Reference Laboratory is located in U.C.D.

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- **mass decontamination** is the procedure deployed where significant numbers of persons are deemed to require decontamination, beyond the normal decontamination capacity; and
  - **equipment decontamination** is the procedure used to clean the specialist equipment/protective suits which personnel use in dealing with hazardous material incidents.

The need for decontamination of individuals will be established by the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers of Operations. The Health Service Executive has responsibility for providing clinical decontamination and medical treatment to casualties affected by hazardous materials. The fire services have responsibility for providing other forms of physical decontamination of persons at the site. The Health Service Executive will be responsible for decontamination where required to protect health service facilities, such as hospitals, from secondary contamination. Where emergency decontamination of the public is required, the fire service may use its fire-fighter decontamination facilities, or improvised equipment may be used prior to the arrival of dedicated equipment. Where persons have to undergo this practice it should be carried out under the guidance of medical personnel. It should be noted that emergency contamination carries risks for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the injured.

## 5.9 Protecting Threatened Populations

### 5.9.1 Introduction

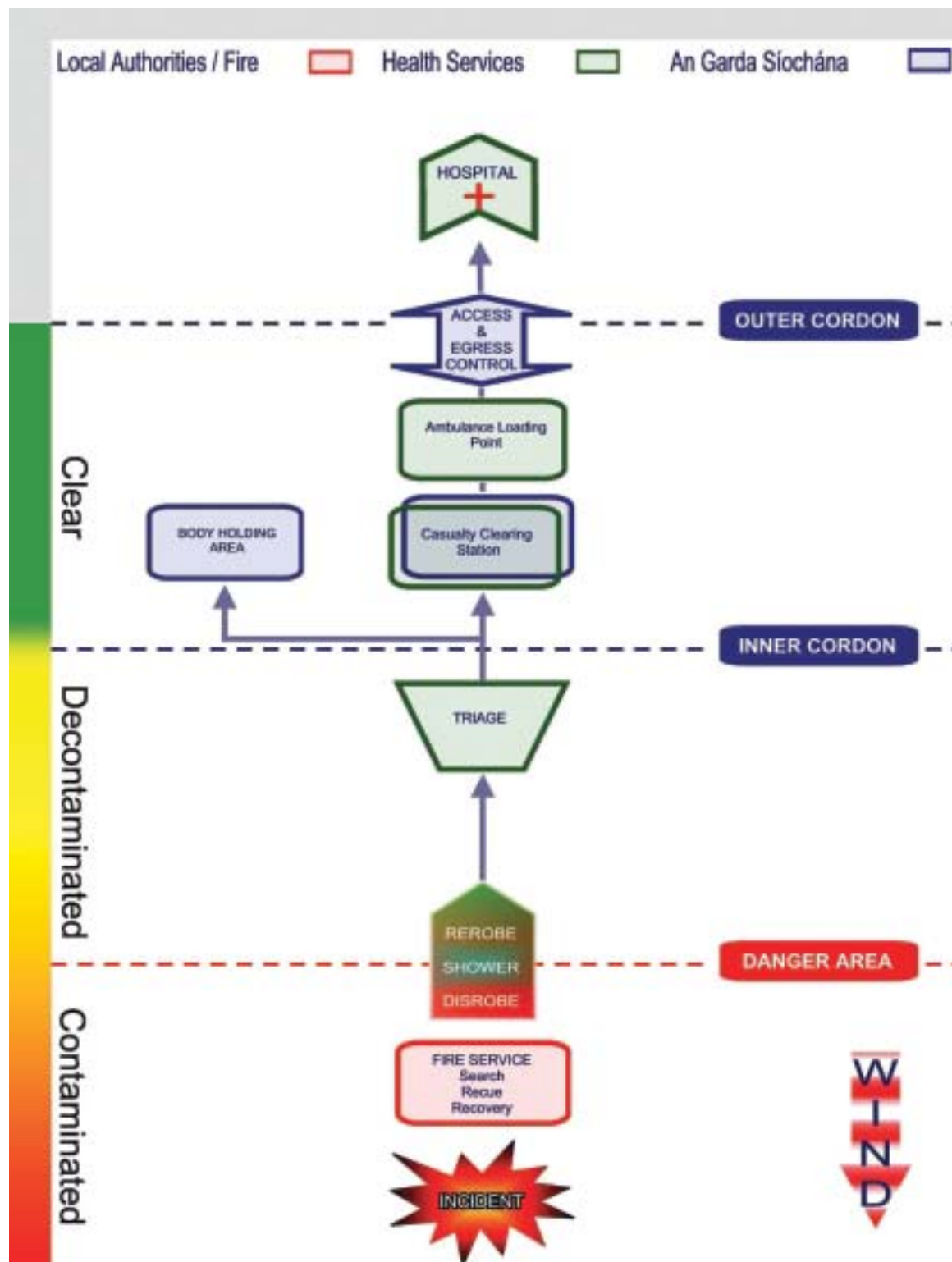
There are circumstances when it may be necessary to protect members of the public who are in the vicinity of an emergency event. This protection is usually achieved by moving people temporarily to a safe area, by evacuation where appropriate or feasible, or by advising affected individuals to take shelter in an appropriate place.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will take the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations.

### 5.9.2 Public Health Services

Where an emergency results in a real or perceived threat to public health by, for example, the release of chemical, radioactive or biological agents, the contamination of water or food supplies, or the spread of contaminated flood water, it can be anticipated that there will be considerable concern among both the persons immediately affected and the wider public. In such situations, the Health Service Executive Controller should ensure that the local public health services are informed of the situation as soon as possible so that they can become involved in the response at the earliest possible stage.

FIGURE 5.4  
Managing Hazardous Materials Incidents



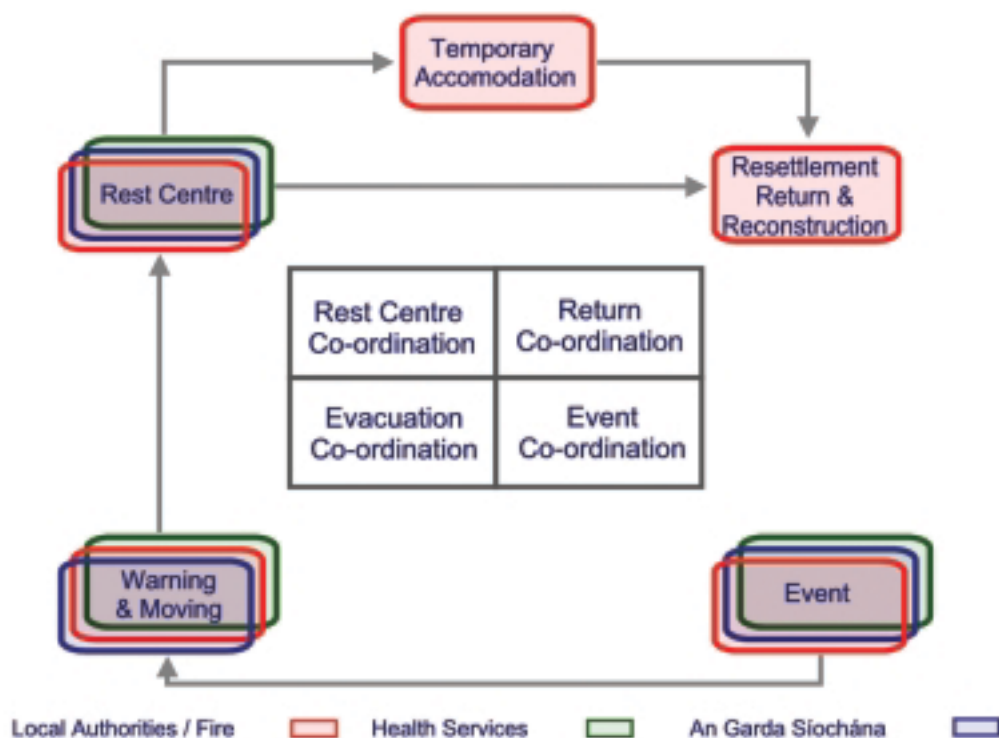
Public health doctors can provide advice, information and re-assurance, where appropriate, to exposed individuals and communities, and can play a key role in the short term and long term monitoring and management of those exposed. They can also play an important part in dealing with queries from the media. Where appropriate, a public health specialist should join the Health Service Executive support team at the Local Co-ordination Centre, to provide guidance and support on public health and public information issues.

### 5.9.3 Evacuation

Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services. It is the responsibility of the Local Authorities to provide Rest Centres for evacuated populations. Where significant numbers of evacuees are involved, the Local/Regional Co-ordination Group may decide on an allocation/distribution system to ensure that appropriate facilities are available for evacuees. Figure 5.5 sets out a model for the structure of an evacuation and additional guidance on evacuation is provided in the associated document *A Guide to Managing Evacuation*.

In some situations, it can be anticipated that there will be a level of self evacuation, and this may need to be considered as part of the emergency management considerations.

FIGURE 5.5





## Structure of Evacuation

### 5.9.4 Weather Forecasts

It may be important to have access to accurate information on local weather conditions and weather forecasts in managing emergencies. Met Éireann provides a 24-hour service, which may be consulted for general or specific weather forecasts.

The Local Co-ordination Group should make contact with Met Éireann, via the normal contact points given in Appendix F6, and weather information and weather forecasts should be distributed from the Local Co-ordination Centre to the site.

Individual services Command, Control or Communication Centres, acting in a support role, may also wish to access Met Éireann's forecasting facilities.

### 5.10 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

Each principal response agency (and other responding organisation) is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety (including personal protective equipment) and welfare management procedures.

Each service should establish from the On-Site Co-ordinator if a Danger Area has been defined (see Section 5.5.4) as part of site management arrangements and, if so, what particular safety provisions may apply.



The Local Authority Controller should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site, as well as for survivors (see Section 5.7.3). These facilities may include the provision of food and drink, rest facilities and sanitary facilities.

### 5.11 Investigations

Depending on the nature of the Major Emergency, agencies other than An Garda Síochána may require access to the site for the purposes of carrying out an investigation. These agencies include the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

An Garda Síochána is responsible for carrying out criminal investigations and in this role may facilitate inquiries carried out by other agencies with an investigative mandate. An Garda Síochána may also be requested to conduct investigations on any aspect of an emergency on behalf of a body charged with holding an inquiry, etc. If there is reason to believe that a criminal act was a contributory factor to a major emergency, An Garda Síochána will begin an investigation, in parallel with the emergency response.





Any agency with an investigative mandate should liaise in the first instance with the On-Site Co-ordinator, who will direct them to the Controller of Operations of An Garda Síochána. In some cases, Protocols and Memorandums of Understanding have been established as an effective way of ensuring adequate liaison between different agencies carrying out investigations.

The preservation of the site of a major emergency, which results from criminal action, is of paramount importance and should receive a priority rating from the outset. The first member(s) of An Garda Síochána to arrive at the site of a major emergency where a suspected crime has been committed automatically incurs the responsibility of preserving the site. While the priority is the protection of life, the provisions of the Framework are intended to assist An Garda Síochána's investigative role.

The scene of a suspected crime will be preserved until a complete and thorough examination has been made. An Garda Síochána will need to obtain evidence of the highest possible standard and will require that all evidence is left in situ, unless a threat to life or health prevents this. Statements may be required from the staff of other principal response agencies on their involvement.

#### **5.12 VIPs/Observers**

Public representatives and other dignitaries may wish to attend the site of the emergency, as well as associated facilities, such as hospitals, to express sympathy on behalf of the public to the injured and bereaved, and to support the emergency response workers.

All requests for visits to the site or facilities associated with it should be referred to the Local Co-ordination Group. Requests for visits to agency specific locations should be referred to that agency's management. Visits by dignitaries will usually require security arrangements and liaison with the media. It is important that the organisation of such visits does not distract from the response effort. As a general rule, VIPs should be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

Multiple requests may be received from persons/groups who wish to observe the response operations. The presence of experts from other regions or jurisdictions, who wish to act as observers at an incident, can greatly enhance the operational debriefings and facilitate the process of learning lessons from the emergency. It may be beneficial to have pre-arranged observer teams, both national and international, for this role. The Local Co-ordination Group should make arrangements for any such observers.



## **5.13 Standing Down the Major Emergency**

### **5.13.1 The Status of the Emergency**

A decision to stand down the major emergency status of the incident at the site should be taken by the On-Site Co-ordinator, in consultation with the other Controllers of Operations at the site and the Local Co-ordination Group. A great deal of activity may continue at locations other than the site (such as the hospitals, temporary mortuary, etc.) after the major emergency is stood down at the site. The Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Groups may need to continue their work after activities at the site have ceased.

### **5.13.2 Standing Down Individual Services**

As the situation is brought under control, each Controller of Operations should review the resources on site and reduce/stand down services in light of the changing situation. The On-Site Co-ordinator should be consulted before a decision is made to stand down any service. Where organisations other than the principal response agencies have responded, they should be informed of the decision to stand them down by the Controller of Operations of the agency which mobilised them. Services operating at other locations should be stood down in a similar manner.

### **5.13.3 Operational Debrief**

Each principal response agency should carry out an operational debriefing of its involvement in the response to every declared major emergency and document this debriefing in a report.

The three principal response agencies should review the inter-agency co-ordination aspects of the response after every declaration of a major emergency. This review should be hosted by the lead agency and involve all services which were part of the response. The purpose of the review should be to formulate the lessons learned from the incident in relation to co-ordination and to document these.

A composite report, based on appropriate input from each principal response agency's internal report and the report on co-ordination, on every declared major emergency should be compiled by the principal response agency which was the initial lead agency for submission within a reasonable timescale to the relevant Regional Steering Group and the National Steering Group.

## Section 6: Recovery

### 6.0 Introduction

Although the emergency response stage may have passed, the recovery stage is also important and includes consideration of many strategic issues, which need to be addressed, at both individual principal response agency and inter-agency level, during this phase. The recovery phase can typically include:

- assisting the physical and emotional recovery of victims;
- providing support and services to persons affected by the emergency;
- clean-up of damaged areas;
- restoration of infrastructure and public services;
- supporting the recovery of affected communities;
- planning and managing community events related to the emergency;
- investigations/inquiries into the events and/or the response;
- restoring normal functioning to the principal response agencies; and
- managing economic consequences.

A structured transition from response to recovery is critical for agencies, both collectively and individually. The recovery stage may be as demanding on the resources and staff of the individual agencies as the emergency itself. As work may extend for a considerable time after the incident, common arrangements are required for co-ordinating the recovery stage. This section of the Framework sets out these co-ordination arrangements.

### 6.1 Functions in the Recovery Phase

Indicative lists of the functions of each of the principal response agencies in the recovery phase are set out below. There are specific requirements for each agency in the recovery process and these should be documented in the recovery section of the Major Emergency Plan. These requirements are:

#### An Garda Síochána

- Identification of fatalities;
- Preservation and gathering of evidence;
- Investigation and criminal issues;
- Dealing with survivors;
- Dealing with relatives of the deceased and survivors; and
- Provision of an appropriate response to the immediate public need.

#### Health Service Executive

- Provision of health care and support for casualties and survivors;
- Support for relatives of casualties and survivors;
- Responding to community welfare needs; and
- Restoration of health services.



Local Authority

- Clean-up;
- Rebuilding the community and infrastructure;
- Responding to community welfare needs (e.g. housing); and
- Restoration of services.

## 6.2 Co-ordination of the Recovery Phase

The need for co-ordination of emerging recovery issues may arise on the agendas of the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Groups from the earliest stages of the response phase. For this reason, the arrangements for co-ordination of response should continue to operate during the transition from response stage to recovery stage. At a point when the issues on the agendas of Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead.

It is recommended that each agency's Crisis Management Team should continue to function until the issues arising in the response phase are more appropriately dealt with by the agency's normal management processes.

Each principal response agency should plan for its involvement in the recovery stage of the major emergency management process.

## 6.3 Emerging Issues

Emerging issues in the recovery phase would be expected to include:

- support and long-term care of victims and their communities;
- strategies for smooth transition from response to recovery stage, particularly where there is a co-ordinated approach to service delivery in areas such as welfare, traffic arrangements, dealing with relatives of deceased, etc.;
- establishing specialist teams to plan and oversee long-term recovery;
- assignment/secondment of staff with specific skills to recovery teams;
- implementing mutual-aid arrangements;
- resourcing issues;
- arrangements for dealing with legal and quasi-legal issues, such as inquiries, criminal investigation, inquests, reports, evidence, etc.

## 6.4 Common Themes in Recovery

There are a number of issues/themes, which are common to each agency. These are discussed briefly in the following sections.



#### **6.4.1 Support and Care of Victims**

The process of recovery and rehabilitation of victims and their communities can be long and arduous, and requires a co-ordinated approach from all of the agencies involved.

#### **6.4.2 Restoring Normality**

This is the process by which the agencies restore their service to normal working arrangements in the aftermath of an incident, often referred to as a return to normality.

#### **6.4.3 Managing Resources**

The demands of a major emergency will impact heavily on the resources, both human and material, of the responding agencies. Consideration needs to be given to managing the conflicting demands of the immediate emergency response, the longer-term recovery and the maintenance of normal services.

#### **6.4.4 Staff Welfare**

Staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident should also be considered. Those members of staff who continue in their normal work are supporting colleagues in the emergency response and may be taking on additional work in the process. They can be as critical to the organisation's response as those involved at the 'coalface'.

#### **6.4.5 Media**


During the recovery phase, media attention will concentrate on local agency activity and there will be a demand for access to senior management, senior officers and public representatives (in the case of the Local Authorities). The media can contribute in a very positive manner at the recovery stage. Strategies should be agreed at inter-agency and local agency level to facilitate the use of this resource.

#### **6.4.6 VIP Visits**

VIP visits will mainly take place during the response, but may continue into the recovery phase. Such visits can present opportunities for raising awareness, reinforcing messages of thanks, speeding up some aspects of recovery and boosting morale of the staff from the responding agencies.

#### **6.4.7 Managing the Direct Financial Implications**

The financial implications of a major emergency for the principal response agencies may be very significant. The resources for response will, by definition, not have been budgeted for, but will have had to be met upfront by the agency. Likewise, very significant



unbudgeted cost may arise in the recovery phase. Each principal response agency should continue recording costs and have control mechanisms for expenditure while delivering services related to the emergency. Attention should be directed to the arrangements for reimbursement of costs associated with the emergency.

#### **6.4.8 Economic impact**

Some major emergencies may have detrimental effects on the local economy. Commercial and industrial concerns, together with the public affected, may look to the principal response agencies for support. This support may not necessarily involve requests for direct financial assistance, which may be directed elsewhere, but may involve the development of common/agreed strategies in a recovery plan dealing with economic impact.

#### **6.4.9 Litigation (Legal/Criminal)**

The aftermath of a major emergency may well feature a number of legal considerations. There may be issues of financial reimbursement, tribunals of inquiry, insurance disputes, as well as accusations of negligence or criminal activity. Legal issues may continue for many years and, as a result, agencies will need to ensure that they have comprehensive records of all decisions, actions and expenditure. There may also be significant resource implications for agencies, which are involved in long-term inquiries and litigation.

#### **6.4.10 Hardship Relief Schemes**

In the past, the Government has instituted hardship relief schemes, administered by the Red Cross, in the aftermath of a number of emergencies. The principal response agencies' recovery co-ordination roles may also involve them in this aspect as well as with other initiatives, such as public appeals to raise funds for victims.

#### **6.4.11 Liaison with the Insurance Industry**

In the aftermath of an emergency, which caused significant property damage, it may be necessary for the principal response agencies to liaise with the insurance industry as part of recovery co-ordination.



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